WHEN MY SHIP COMES IN

GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

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To the dressmakers Silver was a precious customer

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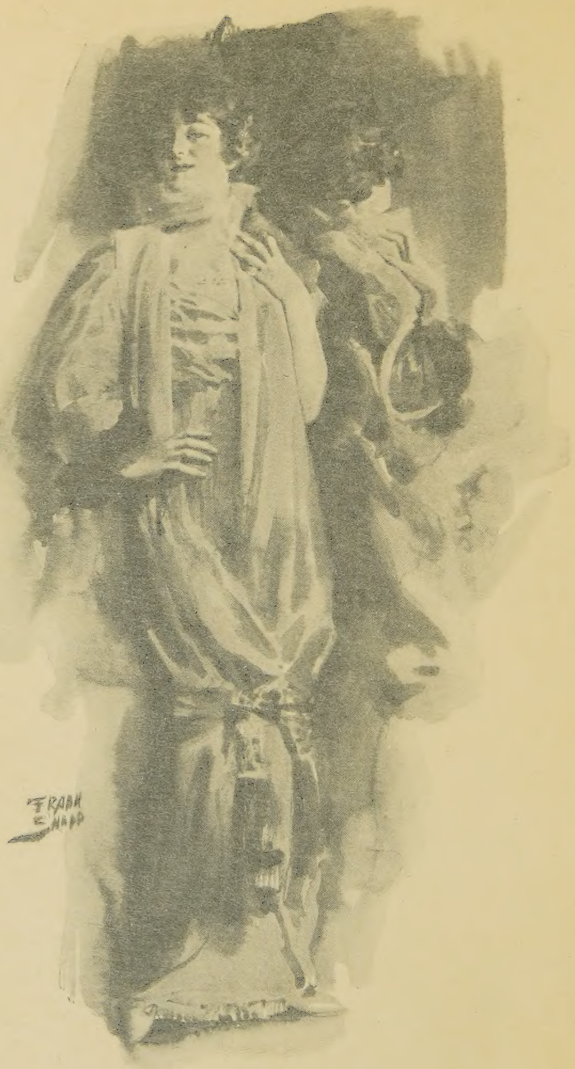
GOUVERNEUR MORRIS

ILLUSTRATED BY

FRANK SNAPP

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
NEW YORK:::::::::::::::::::::::: 1915



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WHEN MY SHIP COMES IN

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I

THE room resembled a chapel. There was an organ built into one wall. There was a rose window, an altar, lilies, a smell of incense. The room didn't resemble a chapel. There was a large rosewood table with a desk telephone. There was a cheval-glass. There was a divan. There was a suit of armor. There was a woman in a sort of coarse nightgown, a rope round the waist, who grovelled, sobbing, in the middle of the floor. There was a smell of cigar smoke.

Up and down the room there paced a man of forty; he dragged his left foot slightly and kept combing a thicket of unnaturally black hair straight up with the long, white fingers of his left hand. He appeared to be lashed into a sort of fury. He kept shouting: "She won't do! She won't do! She won't do!"

The woman on the floor continued to grovel and sob.

Suddenly the pacing man stood still, still as a statue. He turned up the bottom of his waistcoat and found a pin. Holding this between his thumb and finger, he advanced until he was close to the grovelling woman. Then he said: "If you please, Nellie—once more. Try to get it right this time."

Instantly the woman stopped grovelling and sobbing, rose to her feet, straightened her coarse, nightgownesque garment, walked to the altar in a businesslike way, turned, and in a rich, deep, thrilling voice, cried: "Give *me* the child!"

The man writhed, as a musician writhes at a false note, and he cried: "Give me the *child!* Now, then! Once more!"

"*Give* me the child!" cried the woman.

The man literally flung his hand through his hair, and he began to moan and mutter: "Despair! Despair!"

Then he approached the woman and stood just behind her and a little to one side. His voice became a caress.

"Dearest, sweetest Nellie—" he said. "Only listen, and attend for my poor sake—don't accent any one word more than another—make the line

a quiet pastel in gray—almost conversational—slowly, quietly, without accent. Now, then!"

Slowly and quietly the woman began: "Give me the——"

And as she framed her mouth for the word to end the pastel in gray, the man stabbed her with the pin—so that she delivered the word "child" with a sort of agonized scream.

"Genius! Genius!" said the man. "Now, then. Once more."

A second time he stabbed her with eminent success. But at the third trial no stab was necessary. The little lesson in elocution had gone home.

"Oh, you brute," she said, "you've made me bleed!"

"Bah!" said the man. "I've made you great."

Then he flung himself as though exhausted into a deep chair and drummed upon its arm with his long fingers.

"Mr. Hedden?"

"Well, child?"

"If it's a success—couldn't you—I owe such a lot for costumes and things——?"

He smiled upon her with amused tolerance.

"Yes, Nellie," he said, "I *could*—notice the accent—all things are possible to me. And I

would if I thought there was such a quality in you as gratitude. But you are hard, Nellie—hard as the nether stone. No. It won't hurt you, histrionically speaking, to worry about your little bills. And besides, dearest girl, I have yet to break a contract, and ours, I believe, has still three years to run. For years you were a dead loss to me, Nellie——"

"I worked my head off."

"Your what? *My* head, Nellie—you nearly worked *my* head off. And now that I have lifted the murky clouds from her understanding and let in a ray of sunlight, she wants a raise."

The woman's lip quivered.

"Nellie," he said sweetly, "you are the stupidest woman I ever taught. But you are the most beautiful woman I ever saw. Thus do we temper justice with mercy. And now run along, little girl— There is much to do yet."

She bit her lower lip hard.

"I'm being pressed for money right and left."

He rose from his deep chair and extended his right arm to its full length. He looked far away over her head with a prophetic expression in his eyes.

"To-morrow," he said, "you will wake up famous. Those who are now pressing you for money

will be pressing credit upon you. Verily, I have labored, but it was not in vain."

"When shall I see you again?"

"Not soon, Nellie. I have set the ball rolling. Not even I could stop it now. Success is sure. I shall go away to rest—to the sea somewhere. I shall walk in silence by the shores of the loud resounding sea—lonely, as always, and for once, alone."

"Won't you please think over what I've said? That is, if I really turn out to be a success."

"I shall think rather of how you looked, child, the first day I saw you. And so—farewell!"

She left him, trying not to cry, and saying to herself: "The mean, nasty, cheap, underhand old thing."

But that night when they called her before the curtain ten times after the "Give-me-the-*child*" scene with the subsequent grovelling and sobbing she thought more kindly of him.

Nellie Michelin had worked hard for success. She had had ambition to begin with, much beauty of a luxurious and statuesque kind, and a rich and thrilling voice.

Inch by inch McKay Hedden had taught her how to handle her beauty, note by note how to use her voice. He had taught her all the sudden

yelps, snarls, groans, grovellings, and sobbings which an American audience demands of its great emotional actors. And he had taught her to secure terrific effects by changing suddenly to the tones of ordinary conversation.

When she had gone, McKay Hedden went and stood in front of the cheval-glass and talked to himself.

"My boy," he said, "*that* gold-mine will take care of itself, but are we never to live up to our ideals? Are we never to give the damned public anything worth having? Act? She can't act any more than a frying-pan. The play? Junk! Junk! But the dear public will pay—hand over fist—hand over fist. And I shall know that I have cheated them again—taken their candy from them. Have I no conscience? I quiver with it! Oh, for a Terry or a Duse in the rough—sweet sixteen, with the right face and the right temperament! If I can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear—what couldn't I make out of a silk purse?"

Then he went to the big table and spoke into the telephone.

"Mr. Crawley there? . . . I will see him."

He opened a drawer in the desk and took out a manuscript in a blue cover much crumpled and soiled.

Mr. Crawley, a white-faced youth, furtive-eyed, one shoulder higher than the other, slipped noiselessly into the room.

"Mr. Crawley."

"Yes, sir."

"I am ready to dictate."

"Yes, sir."

To Paul Henley, Esq.,
18 Pell Street, New York, N. Y.

DEAR MR. HENLEY—

I have read your play entitled "The Greater Love." I regret to inform you that it does not seem to me suitable for the stage. If I may speak bluntly it seems to me "All Wrong." I should advise you to destroy it, to forget it, and to try something, if you must write for the stage, in a lighter vein. Believe me, this is meant in all kindness.

I am sincerely yours——

"Bring me that to sign. And here, take this manuscript, and send it to Mr. Henley with the letter."

"Yes, sir."

"But before you send it, Mr. Crawley—copy it."

A strange gleam came into Mr. Crawley's furtive eyes.

"Yes, sir."

"And when you have copied it, compare your copy with the original, word for word, comma for comma."

"Yes, sir—but I thought you said it was very bad."

"It is *so* bad," said Mr. Hedden, "that I wish to keep a copy of it to show my friends."

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Crawley took the manuscript and withdrew as quietly as he had come.

Mr. Hedden smote his hands together.

"And now," he exclaimed, "for a Duse to play it!"

II

CERTAIN things in McKay Hedden's character were sincere and worth while. He loved art and he loved the sea. Gone upon a summer vacation, he shed many of those affectations which made him so notable and eccentric a figure on Broadway. He carried with him nothing indeed of his professional life save certain schemes for fall productions and a bright eye for histrionic talent in the embryo.

To swim, to sail a boat, to fish, and to converse with old men of the sea were his favorite relaxations. He kept his boat, a thirty-foot yawl, at New Bedford, and whenever he could spare the time went for cruises upon her. All the waters to the south of Cape Cod were an open and agreeable book to him.

His crew was a man named Jeremiah Crum, a little bullet-shaped man, who was almost deaf and not in the least dumb. He was supposed to have lost his hearing through standing too near the mouth of a cannon to see if he could

see the cannon-ball come out. Even this experience, however, had not cured his adventurous and inquiring disposition. He was ready to try anything once. And he could handle a boat as an international polo-player handles a pony. He could handle a boat, and he could keep a boat clean and her brass shining, and he was a capital cook.

For a day or two Hedden took no part in the management of the *Basin*. He lay for the most part upon his back, his eyes shaded, his hands crossed. He had finished the winter and the long spring with unimpaired nervous energy, but physically exhausted. And he now turned himself over bodily to the sun, the southwest wind, and the delicious ocean nights.

On the third day he wore his bathing suit for a while, and went overboard once or twice. As his white skin browned and thickened he wore his bathing suit more and more, and at the end of ten days was the color of old mahogany.

Then he began to take a more active interest in life, and to let himself be seen by the amphibious population of Buzzard's Bay and Vineyard Haven Sound. He seldom failed of an effect. The youthful, well-made body, the arms and legs and face burned almost black, the head crowned

with its great thicket of upstanding hair aroused a buzz of comment wherever seen.

And the fact that he was McKay Hedden, the famous manager, discoverer of Nellie Michelin and other great and mighty stars, was pretty sure to leak out sooner or later, and add to the interest which his unusual appearance excited.

Gradually, but without making acquaintances and always pursuing a sort of tragic isolation, he mixed more and more with the various summer colonies; swimming from populous beaches, looking through windows and doorways at hotel hops, and now and then exchanging words with persons of well-known importance.

Then he and the *Buskin* would vanish for days at a time—to Gay Head—to No-Man's Land—nobody knew where: to return, to vanish again, and to make a general mystery of themselves.

One day Jeremiah Crum came aft without being invited, and said: "Say, it's makin' up for an easterly storm."

Hedden had to shout to make himself heard. He had a beautiful voice, and enjoyed exercising it. That was one reason why he employed Crum.

"I know it," he shouted. "What of it?"

"Didn't know as you'd want to get cot out in it."

"Well, I do want to get cot in it. So go forward and mind your business."

Crum pulled a long face and went forward, muttering to himself. When a sufficient time had elapsed, Hedden summoned him aft.

"I said I *didn't* want to get cot in it."

"Thot you said you did."

"Didn't—didn't. So lay a course for Hanleytown and be quick about it."

They drifted into Hanleytown harbor stern first with the tide. There was a dead oily calm. The sky was a bleak unbroken gray.

"You stay by the ship, Crum. I'm going to weather this storm ashore. What's the best hotel?"

"They ain't no hotel, only boarding-houses and folks as takes boarders."

McKay Hedden packed a couple of valises and had himself rowed ashore.

It was discouraging to find that quiet old Hanleytown had taken a sudden leap into popularity as a summer resort. The boarding-houses were brim full, and signs of rooms to let were as rare as dodos.

Hedden left his luggage at the steamship wharf and wandered at random through the picturesque town, at once troubled because he could find no

lodging, and artistically pleased by the continual discovery of some charming old doorway or group of gables, or some other touch of the rich old whaling days.

The gray sky gave just the proper touch of color. It must have been on just such days that mothers and wives thought most tenderly and anxiously of sons and husbands, ploughing far-off and dangerous oceans.

It occurred to him that the quiet and beautiful town lying so prettily and patiently by its land-locked harbor, waiting for the whalers to come home, would be a perfect play-setting for his new play. The play that he was going to paraphrase from "The Greater Love," which he had rejected so firmly and returned to its author.

It would not be the first play that Hedden had stolen; but it would be the best.

Of course he did not steal things bodily. He merely snatched other people's toil to serve his needs, disguising their inventions and creations so that they could barely recognize them themselves.

He was a most adroit and conscientious thief, a most cautious and plausible thief. If the action of his original was laid among mountains, he laid the action of his stealings among valleys. Of his

original he used neither names nor lines, nor stage directions. He altered, changed, rearranged, and so cleverly and carefully that at least three of his productions, or rather reproductions, had stood the test of the courts and been pronounced the original work of his own brain.

He laughed aloud to think how easy it would be to transfer "The Greater Love" into a whaling key. The piece would be genuinely strengthened. And all at once his acute perceptions began to drink in color and to create color.

Why are all the water-front houses of Hanleytown set at an angle to the street? So that from the upper windows those living in expectation may look directly toward the great light on Cape Hope around which the topsails of homing whalers are first to be seen. He put that away in his memory for instance.

Displayed in a shop-window he saw a collection of whaling irons—harpoons, lances, and spades—and instantly he had chosen the dreadful weapon with which the murder should be done—the old-fashioned two-edged harpoon, the blade of which is shaped precisely like the human heart. How should he make the audience realize that the blade was so shaped? He began to give his attention to that problem. And while

he was solving it, the name of the new piece was gratuitously presented to him by those fairies which watch over the concentrated mind. "The Greater Love" was a wretched, banal, nondescript name, but it fitted the plot like a glove. Well, "When My Ship Comes In" fitted better than a glove, like the skin itself, and furthermore in the lines themselves it could be lightly or tragically played upon, and its meanings doubled almost ad infinitum.

A sudden gust of wind smote him in the face; and all the ancient windows in that part of the town rattled. He made a mental note of that. Then from the roses above an old lovely doorway pink petals began to fall, and he pictured *Her* standing below them, talking for the last time to *Him*, and then again so standing, looking out toward Cape Hope, waiting for her ship to come in. . . . And he saw the villain creeping up through the shadows, enraged by drink, the heart-shaped harpoon in his hand. . . . The *Whaler* has rounded Cape Hope, her flag at half-mast. . . . What misfortune has befallen? . . . What woman among that gentle, patient, heart-torn crowd has lost a husband, a son—or a lover?

Smoke from a chimney blew downward into the street in a sudden eddy and made him cough.

. . . He had never seen just that effect in a stage storm. And he made a mental note of it.

Rounding a corner he came face to face with a little fat man who was hurrying. Hedden's grave, preoccupied face broke into an instant smile.

"For God's sake," he said, "it's Carlotti!"

The fat man came to a dead halt, turned the color of ashes, and struck out with his hands as if swimming.

"I'm not the man to forget a face," said Hedden. "And what are you doing here—hiding?"

"You're McKay Hedden." The fat man had recovered his equilibrium, though not his color, and he still trembled. "I've followed your career in the papers. What are *you* doing here?"

"Oh, loafing. Inviting my soul. But you, Carlo—I gave you up for dead a dozen years ago—but not even the too sordid flesh has melted. What are you afraid of?"

"I've had eighteen years of peace—only to be recognized at last. But you'll not say you've seen me. We were good friends once, Mac. You'll not give me away. That wouldn't be like you."

"Why should I give you away? My dear fellow, I was always heartily glad you weren't caught. But—do you live here?"

The fat man nodded.

"I'm Captain Eugene Sands," he said.

"Captain?"

Captain Sands blushed.

"It's just come about from pretending that I'd followed the sea. It doesn't mean any more than colonel in the South. . . . Yes, it does too, because I do know something about ships, and they don't know anything about armies. I mean the fake ones don't."

"Are you married?"

"I've got a daughter sixteen years old."

"Don't tell me you married Rose."

"Of course."

"I can't bear it! Rose!"

"Why not?"

"Oh, it's so right. It's too good to be true. And you two have hidden here all these years."

"But you haven't told me what you're doing here?"

"I came in my boat, and I'm ashore looking for lodgings till this northeaster blows over. But the town is full as a tick."

"Don't say a word," cried Captain Sands, "not one word. Old friends. Happy reunion. Rose delighted. But where is your luggage?"

"You can put me up?"

"Oh, language," cried Captain Sands, "how in-

adequate thou art to express the simplest meaning! But Mac—one favor—not a word out of the past. Silver doesn't know that we was ever connected with the profession. And we don't want her ever to know."

"Silver?"

"My daughter."

"But Silver—is that her name?"

"We tried for Silvia," said Captain Sands, "but the minister was deaf, and we had to be content with Silver. And we are."

"I should think you would be," said Hedden. "Silver—Silver Sands. It's a beautiful name, and perhaps"—his face brightened—"I shall beg, borrow or steal the use of it some day—when my ship comes in."

III

"MOTHER," said Captain Sands, "an old friend."

Mrs. Sands shook hands limply, and looked the newcomer in the eye without a sign of recognition.

"She doesn't know me from Adam," said Hedden sadly. "Rose doesn't know me."

"Now hold on," said Mrs. Sands, "give me time. Your voice is familiar. Your— Heavens, it isn't! It can't be! But you had red hair——!"

"Many winters of discontent," said Hedden.

"Well, I'll be jiggered," exclaimed Mrs. Sands. "It is McKay Hedden."

"I haven't even changed my name—like some people," he said. "But don't worry. Why should I split on a couple of old pals? Rose, I'm glad to see you again. The past wasn't all pleasant. But some of the friendships were."

"But come in," cried the hospitable Captain Sands. "Don't stand palavering in the hall. This house has a parlor and a sideboard."

"And I hope," said Hedden, "that the spare bedroom is really—to spare. Rose, you'll not let me put you to any inconvenience?"

They drew him affectionately into the parlor. It was an honest square room with four windows, two of which looked on the harbor, and two of which looked on a plot of sunburned grass, surrounded by hollyhocks.

To Hedden's quick eyes the room was a whole palette of whaling colors—from she-walrus teeth on the mantel, scrimshawed with Samoan dancing girls in high-heeled French slippers, to the working model of a whaler under glass; from the ivory swift on Mrs. Sands's sewing-table to the whalebone, now doing duty as a paper-knife, on the table devoted to magazines and current literature. On the walls were rude seascapes: a lighthouse, a ship in a storm, a whale-boat being bitten in two by a Grecian-nosed sperm-whale.

There was a harpoon in one corner, a boat spade in another, both highly polished and showing every evidence of being appreciated.

"I see nothing," said Hedden, "to remind me of the old life."

"We've got some of our things locked away in the attic," said Mrs. Sands. "Sometimes when Silver's away visiting we get them out, and

talk over old times. But we've thought best to keep the child in ignorance of our past."

"If she knew that she was of theatrical descent," said Captain Sands solemnly, "it would be the last straw."

"Why so?"

"She'd take as naturally to the stage," said Mrs. Sands, "as a mermaid takes to the water. It's in her blood."

"But Rose," objected Hedden, "you and Carlo weren't exactly on the stage."

"Between the wings or under canvas," she said, "it's all one. There's all kinds of dramatic instincts. It's all dress yourself up and show yourself off and get the hands, whether you're Cardinal Richelieu showing up at the palace after you're supposed to be dead, or whether you're Rose Lisbon dressed in pink tights, getting shot out of a cannon, and catching to a swinging trapeze by your teeth."

"You're right, Rose," said Hedden. "I've played a good many parts in my time. But I worked harder to get the lugs and flourishes of a first-class ringmaster than I'd work at Antony's address to the Romans."

"It may not be high art," said Captain Sands, "to play tunes on sleigh-bells and beer-bottles,

and then come out as a red Indian and scalp an emigrant train, and change inside of thirty seconds to a high-salaried clown, and nobody know you was the same man playing all the parts. . . . It may not be high art, but mark me it keeps you going some."

"Don't forget that for six months you exhibited a troupe of trained seals," Mrs. Sands reminded him affectionately.

"Yes," said Captain Sands, "I was a jack of all trades in those days. I am still. You'll tell me by and by if the plumbing in this house is a first-class job or not. Rose and me, we installed the whole shooting-match. Why, we had the first bath in Hanleytown——"

McKay Hedden put back his aristocratic head and laughed joyously.

"I mean we had the first set tub," his host explained. "And not only that, but I've installed systems for other people, and made a good thing out of it."

"You were by way of being well fixed in the old days. And prosperity doesn't seem to have abandoned the ship."

"I'm well off," said Captain Sands simply, "for my station in life. Silver will be quite a catch for these parts."

"But I want to see Miss Silver," exclaimed Hedden. "I love her name. I feel that we shall have a great deal in common."

"You'll be careful, Mac, won't you? We wouldn't have her know for anything. Her mind runs plenty enough to the stage as it is."

"Trust me to be careful," said Hedden. "But I hope you're not going to let me go with my curiosity unsatisfied. What became of you afterward? Right afterward? Or mustn't I ask? Is the memory too painful?"

"All that's painful about it," said Captain Sands, "is the fear of being found out. When you recognized me and called me by the old name, I nearly dropped dead in my tracks. At first I used to see his fat, nasty, oily face in my dreams——"

Mrs. Sands rose.

"I must see about supper," she said.

When she had gone Captain Sands smiled cynically.

"No matter how bad a man is," he said, "no woman likes to think of his being dead, if he was ever sweet on her. Oh, I'm not jealous. She hated him, hates him yet. But she'd like to think that he was alive somewhere far off, thinking about her, and envying me, and unable to get at us."

"We all knew there was going to be trouble," said Hedden. "What was the immediate cause?"

"Never mind what it was exactly, Mac. Use your dramatic instinct. Anyhow I got there in the nick of time. I'd been repairing one of my bell-straps—you know, a sort of heavy leather belt with the bells sewed the length of it. I had it in my hand. But, good God, I didn't expect to kill him. I *wanted* to kill him. But I didn't think you *could* kill a man, a man of his build and vitality, with a thing like that. What a noise those bells made every time I struck him!"

"Exit to music," murmured Hedden.

"I must have struck him twenty times," said Captain Sands. "Wherever I could reach him. Suddenly the strap kind of wrapped round his neck and jaw—and he just went limp all over and fell on his back. *I* didn't think he was dead. I just thought I'd got his goat, and he was playing possum to escape more punishment. When I made my getaway I thought it was from a 'sault-and-battery suit—nothing more. But when I got the morning papers saying he was dead, and the police of the whole continent was on the look-out for me, I had the horrors all right. Somehow they missed me—all but one feller—a plain-clothes man. He . . . I just showed him a

photograph of Rose, and told him the whole story. . . . He said she looked something like his girl out in Milwaukee, and he turned his back and bent over to tie his shoe, and when he looked up I was gone. I had a friend outside of Greenwich, Connecticut—an old farmer. He hid me for a while. Then Rose joined me, and the old man being a justice of the peace married us. And we lit on this place, Hanleytown, more by good luck than good management, and Silver was born here, and it's our home now, and we're part of it."

"After Baring's death," said Hedden tactfully, "the show went down-hill. I quit it early the next year, and got a job on Broadway more, as you say, by good luck than good management. And that's been my home ever since. Rose is looking well."

"She looks just the same to me," said Captain Sands. "She says she's fat, but I don't notice it."

Hedden smiled behind his hand.

"Rose," he said judicially, "at sixteen—the year she joined us—was the prettiest girl I've seen, with perhaps one exception."

"I shouldn't wonder," said Captain Sands, "if you'd make another exception in favor of Silver. Of course just now she's all burnt up with

sun and wind—she's a great one to sail and swim—but take her around Christmas time——"

"I like 'em brown," said Hedden. "God meant women to be brown——"

"Halloo there, captain!"

Hedden evidently had not come into the focus of her eyes, and she thought herself alone with her father. She wore a black bathing suit, dripping wet; her arms, face, and neck were the color of bright bronze. Her eyes, ocean blue, shone with health and exhilaration.

"We spilled every drop of wind," she explained. "So we anchored and swam home. Where's mum?"

"Mr. Hedden," said Captain Sands, "my daughter Silver."

"I can't shake hands," she said, "because I'm not allowed on the parlor carpet with wet feet."

"You go right up-stairs," said Captain Sands, "and change into something ladylike. Mr. Hedden is visiting us for a few days; you don't have to stand here looking for all the world like Niobe and talking to him now."

She nodded to them and vanished. They could hear her stockinged feet making swift boyish work of the stairs.

"What color is Miss Silver's hair?" said Hedden.

"Some call it brown—some red," said Captain Sands.

"It was too wet to tell," said Hedden. "But if it's the color I think it is, why I shall have to make that other exception we were talking about."

His face broke into a sudden and very attractive smile. "I make it anyway," he said. "She is the prettiest girl I ever saw."

Captain Sands began to swell with pride, for all the world like a complacent, easy-going, and well-to-do toad.

IV

THOUGH Hedden had promised to make no reference to those old days when his hosts had figured as entertainers of the public, he saw no reason for not talking about his own business as a producer of plays, Broadway, and the drama in general and particular.

Since landing in Hanleytown his mind had been full of the new play which he was to evolve from the ashes of "The Greater Love," and Silver's sudden appearance in the parlor door, dripping wet, had supplied him with an "entrance" that had been defying his powers of invention. Having no other star in the least available he had been mentally casting Nellie Michelin for the leading part in "When My Ship Comes In," but the thought of her efforts to appear casual in a dripping bathing suit was too much for his sense of humor. No "fine woman" masquerading as sweet sixteen could be anything but ridiculous in that naïve and tragic drama of youth and aspiration and the sea.

If he looked more often at Rose and the captain, Silver, sitting across from him at the supper-table, received from time to time a glance, which, casual and natural as it seemed, was still full of the closest attention and scrutiny.

All in white, her rich brown coloring paled a little by the soft candle-light, her face full of humor and expression, her eyes so dark and steady as almost to seem tragic, she seemed to him more an ideal of his mind's creation than a girl of flesh and blood. In short he could find no fault with her. And he enjoyed some such feelings as may be attributed to a miner who has stumbled by pure accident upon a rich pocket of gold.

She had the least tendency in the world to say "bot" instead of "bought," "cot" instead of "caught," but to Hedden this seemed less a lapse from the king's best accent than a delicate and delicious smear of local color. Just so, he thought, should the heroine speak in "When My Ship Comes In." For the rest, her voice, neither high nor low, had a fine carrying quality and was strongly personal to her, boyish, daring, and sweet-tempered.

His experience and success had taught him to regard the women of the stage with cynicism,

not altogether with respect to their morals but rather with regard to their mental development and their attitude toward life, toward society, and toward themselves. In complimenting a woman upon a given performance he made a habit of referring to the physical rather than to the mental aspect of it. For instance, he would not say, "You were capital in the church scene," but rather, "You looked beautiful in the blue brocade." And the longer a woman had been upon the stage, in fact the older she was, the better she enjoyed his discrimination.

But he had noticed that the beginners often clung to the mental side of play-acting, and so now, in speaking of the stage, he spoke with reverence, laying more stress upon character than upon beauty or even success. They asked him about Mrs. Michelin, so suddenly become famous under his management, and he told them her story, as it pleased him to improvise upon it for the occasion.

"Of course," he said, "I was in a position to teach her a great deal. And although she had all sorts of wonderful emotional possibilities it was hard for her to bring them out. I don't mean that she was stupid—far, far from it, only that she had greater physical and especially vocal dif-

ficulties than seemed just or right. A man might be the cleverest man in the world, and yet require years of hard work to be cured of stuttering. She had a lovely natural voice, but at first, and for weary months and even years, she could not seem to make it carry beyond the footlights. . . . Now your voice, Miss Silver, has what we call the carrying quality; without raising it, or straining it, without training, just using it naturally, as you speak to me across the table, your voice would carry clearly and easily to the gallery of a large theatre. Do you see what I mean?"

And he turned to Rose and the captain. They nodded. "Well, by dint of incessant practise, she got that quality. How? I should have to recall too many hours of bitter discouragement. Do you, Miss Silver, remember when you couldn't swim?"

"No," she said, "but I remember when I couldn't keep my eyes open under water."

"You ride a bicycle?"

"Yes."

"Do you remember when you couldn't?"

She nodded.

"And all of a sudden you could, and it seemed very simple, indeed? It was like that with Mrs. Michelin's voice. Without effort now, without

really knowing how she does it, she reaches the remotest galleryan and gives him thrills and shudders. All character, Miss Silver. No work was too hard for her, and now she is so trained, so experienced, so sensitive to dramatic possibilities, that the least hint to her is sufficient."

He smiled inwardly, recalling how, by prodding her with a pin, he had at last induced her to accent a desired word.

"And now," he went on, "she is revered, not as an actor, but as a woman, as the embodiment of success achieved against great obstacles by sheer force of character. It is no longer necessary for her to be beautiful—her art is now the transcendent part of her. And incidentally"—he broke into a boyish laugh—"she is making so much money she doesn't know what to do with it. I tell you"—he looked directly at Silver—"it must be a splendid feeling—to feel that you can have automobiles, houses, private cars, all because you had the strength of character to attack a line of great resistance and force yourself through. . . . And she's by no means the only woman on Broadway to whom I take off my hat, in the spirit, whenever I think of her."

Silver's eyes were shining brightly. He caught the look, and he thought: "I could land you

with a turn of the wrist, Silver Sands, and I believe I could make something of you." Aloud he said: "Lots of young women come to me and beg for a chance. I used to encourage them, but I don't any more. When all's said and done it's a cruel life—if you fail. And to succeed requires either natural genius for histrionics, a quality quite alien to the Anglo-Saxon race, or such courage, patience, and character as a man has no right to expect from a woman."

"Just what I'm always saying," said Captain Sands. "And if Mr. Hedden doesn't know what he's talking about, nobody knows."

And both he and his wife were pleased with Hedden for his phrases of discouragement. But to Silver, and just so the subtle man had meant them, they were not a discouragement but a challenge.

She had thought of going on the stage, never seriously, but as so many have, in a vague, enchanted way. She had never encountered even a remote opportunity till now. If she seriously wished to make a beginning, if her parents could be made to consent (which she doubted to extremes), surely her father's old friend could not refuse to take her under his wing, and she thought in her heart: "I'd like to do it, not because I want

to go on the stage, but just to show him that more than one girl has got courage and patience and character."

Hedden looked at her with that sudden boyish smile which made you forget his unnaturally black hair in favor of his white teeth.

"A penny for your thoughts!" he said.

And Silver, who had only just left the awkward age, and was still delightfully easy to tease, blushed to her eyes and looked charmingly sullen and defiant.

The sudden rain smote the dining-room windows like spent shot, and the wind, which had been steadily rising, began to howl in the gables of the house.

"Wolves!" said Hedden, his eyes very brilliant. "The honest backwoodsman, his sturdy family—snow-bound—hunger— Ever see that old melodrama, Rose? The bar of the door breaks, Miss Silver, and the hero replaces it with his brawny right arm."

"And then what happens?"

"Well, when I played the part, the hero's brawny right arm stuck, and there was the devil to pay to get it out and let the rescuers in. We had to bring on the stage carpenter with a saw. It was the first real laugh I ever got."

V

THE northeaster visited Hanleytown for three days. On the morning of the fourth early risers looking from water-side windows saw a fleet of storm-bound schooners spreading their white wings for the sea. The sky was without a cloud; the harbor without a ripple; the tones of ordinary conversation carried from the decks of the schooners to the shore. And from the ocean beach three miles to the southeastward came the low rhythmic roaring of a heavy surf.

For a man without conscience or moral sense McKay Hedden had had a bad night. Dawn saw him, shaved and half dressed, cluttering a table with notes for "When My Ship Comes In." Working unseen, the manager-playwright was without affectations. He rolled up his sleeves, squared himself to a pad of paper, and waded in, as the saying is. Concerning genius and sudden inspiration he had no private illusions. He didn't believe in God, but he believed in elimination. "Put the thing down in all the ways you can think of and keep the best one" was his unconfessed principle of composition.

The storm had been an incentive to work; also the ever-strengthening feeling that in Silver Sands he had discovered just the heroine the new piece would need. Mrs. Sands had supplied him with a kitchen table; and to this he had thumb-tacked a double foolscap of blue blotting-paper, protesting that Shakespeare himself had never owned so good a desk.

One morning, carrying to the post-office some letters that he had written, and accompanied by Silver, he stopped suddenly in front of a doorway, which by reason of a fanlight, justice of proportion, and two delicately fluted columns was completely charming, and his head a little on one side, he said: "Will you do me a favor?"

"With pleasure."

"Then stand on that door-step, take the knocker in your left hand, and then turn and look at me over your shoulder as if—as if I had called out some bad news to you just as you were going to knock."

Silver looked swiftly up the street, then down. The rain had kept it empty. Perceiving this she gave a quick, half-mischievous laugh, and mounted the two stone steps to the door, took the knocker in her left hand, lifted it, and turned to Hedden a face at once frightened and brave. He had

asked for a pose only; she had given him the very expression that according to his vision of the scene in question went with it, and Silver, seeing her success in his eyes, went further, and said with a sharp metallic anxiety: "What is it? What is it?"

"What is it?" he exclaimed. "Change that wet rubber coat for muslin sprinkled with roses, change that umbrella in your right hand for the blind captain's telescope, and *you're* it—Silver. Come away. It's scandalous—such facility—it's a crime. The first thing *I* know I'll be tempted beyond my strength."

She joined him, and they walked swiftly on, their sou'westered heads bent against the wind and rain.

"How do you mean—*tempted?*" asked Silver.

"Silver," he said, "it's a pity your people are so down on the stage. What after all can they know of the show business?"

"Nothing—of course," said Silver.

Hedden, remembering the old days and the hells through which the girl's mother had passed in her youth, smiled darkly.

"It's not based on knowledge," he said; "it's based on New England prejudice. But times have changed. A girl in one of my companies is as

sheltered as in her mother's parlor. And the wages of success are so big now, and success itself is so fine a thing—because audiences all over the land have grown so sophisticated and discriminating. The old days are dead. What do I mean by being 'tempted'? I mean: to say to you just the sort of thing I've being saying. I'll go further. You've got the face, the temperament, the grace, the instinct, and if you haven't got the character, I'm no judge of women."

She liked being called a woman. Girls do. Women don't.

"But you'll marry one of these perfectly nice young boys you're always sailing and swimming and dancing with, and you'll go housekeeping and baby-raising in a little square house, which may or may not have a pretty front door, and you'll be wasted, Silver. That's the kind of thing," he laughed boyishly, "that I'm often tempted to say to you."

"Oh!" said Silver.

And they came to the post-office, and he dropped his letter into the slot marked "outgoing mail."

"And you'll spend a good deal of time in this very post-office," he went on, "pretending you are expecting letters, in reality to exchange gossip with your neighbors, and gradually in the glass

fronts of the letter-boxes you'll see your face grow old and disappointed. It isn't every girl that has it in her to be a hit on Broadway—yes, and in London. If you were my own daughter, I'd not hesitate. . . . It isn't as if you'd have to begin at the bottom, Silver. You're the one girl in a million. Sometimes I think you must have Latin blood. You can't help being dramatic. That first entrance of yours in the wet bathing suit! The way you caught my exact shade of meaning when you played the knocker scene just now!"

. . . . . .

The breakfast-hour found him still working. He stacked his papers, weighted them with the soap-dish to keep them from scattering, finished dressing, and went down-stairs.

Silver was alone in the dining-room.

"Good morning," he said, "where's the family?"

"Mum's in the kitchen," said Silver, "and father's at the boat-house looking the weather over. Food, however, will materialize almost at once——"

"Good," said Hedden. "I've been working since daybreak."

"Your new play?"

"*Our* new play, Silver. . . . Look here; I don't like to interrupt a streak of work. It isn't easy to stop—go somewhere else—and pick up again. I wonder if I can't find rooms somewhere in Hanleytown?"

"Why not stay on with us?"

"Your family has been very good," said Hedden. "They've pressed me to stay—as long as I like. But, look here, oughtn't I to—well, I don't want to graft, you know; couldn't you find out if they'd be willing to board me? I'd be more comfortable."

"I suppose we *are* poor," said Silver, "but they wouldn't hear of you paying board, Mr. Hedden. Mum was saying only yesterday what a privilege it was to have a great man in the house. The longer you stay the better they'll like it."

"I wonder," said Hedden. "Well, you settle it, Silver. Shall I go or shall I stay?"

"*You'll* stay," said she with an arch emphasis which delighted him.

"You see," he said, "you can help me so much."

"*I* can?"

"Why, don't you see, whenever I get a scene finished, or think I've got it finished, we can carry it down to the shore, or off into the woods, and act

it all out, and find what's wrong with it or what's right with it. It's much the best way to compose, if you have an intelligent partner."

At this moment they were interrupted by the entrance of Captain Sands.

"Good morning, Mac," he said. "I've been admiring your yawl. I'm going to have me one just like her one of these days."

"Good man," cried Silver. "When?"

"Oh," said he, "when my ship comes in."

VI

HEDDEN lost no opportunity to consult with Silver about his newest plagiarism, of which a rough draft was soon finished. He had set his heart on securing the girl to play the leading part, and was now prepared to exert all his ingenuity in fitting that part and indeed every line of the play to her particular personality. To be a Broadway success he told himself she had only to be natural; for the most sophisticated critic has yet to resist a beautiful mouth that laughs under beautiful eyes that mourn; adding to these a strong graceful figure and a brave boyish voice.

He himself could not have said when he had been so charmed with any one.

It is the happy-go-lucky custom of boys and girls dwelling on Cape Cod and its adjacent islands to do without chaperons. Of this custom Hedden took firm advantage, claiming that, for all his experience, he was still a boy at heart.

To his credit, for every man must have a little credit tucked away somewhere, his attraction to Silver was at this time purely professional. If he

kept her out sailing or walking until they were late for supper, it was not so that he might have opportunities to play upon her affection. He wished less to dazzle her with his own wealth, power, talents, and prestige, than with the glamour of the stage.

Upon a bluff overlooking the upper bay he had found a place where he could experiment with "When My Ship Comes In" to his heart's content. Here scrub-oaks, old as the hills and no higher than the second-story windows of a house, had been permitted by the salt ocean winds to grow in serried ranks about an open glade. These oaks in turn were surrounded by a dense growth of alders and bayberry bushes which, from a foot-high beginning of rose and sweet-fern, swept upward to the lower branches of the oaks like an ocean swell. To the glade itself no wind could penetrate; here candles might have burned peacefully during a hurricane. And here in dry weather a writer might handle his most precious manuscript without fear. Emerging from the grove by a narrow and much-twisting path you could hang your feet over the edge of the bluff, and at high tide observe the pretty comings and goings of minnows in the clear salt water below.

To the north, two miles, as a crow might fly

if he flew straight, were green elms, the white spires and the many-masted harbor of Hanleytown. As many miles to the south, and separated from the bay by a narrow belt of sand-dunes and sea-beach, the Atlantic made itself known by long-drawn roarings and great tossings of white spray.

In the glade you could be as private as in your own parlor. More so: you could shout and rant if you pleased and play this part or that, and there were no neighbors to disturb except the crew of some passing boat, or some circling gull. And in the hot summer sun the essential oils of the sweet-fern and of the bayberries vaporized and gave out heavenly odors. And these odors were added to those of wild roses and ripe blackberries.

In this glade Hedden coached Silver in the part which he hoped she would play. But that he so hoped she had as yet no suspicion. She thought that she was helping him, in something the way that a lay figure might have helped; that she was merely a help to him in visualizing the action of the piece. As for instance he might say:

"That won't do, according to the stakes" (he had staked the place off to represent the distances of his New York stage). "If you take even one

step backward, you will bump into the man with the fish-net. We'll get a laugh that way, but not the kind we want. What *would* you do, naturally, if a girl said that to you? Would you step back in astonishment, or would you just stand and look at her?"

"I think," said Silver, "you'd just stand and look at her until your eyes filled with tears, and——"

He interrupted her quickly.

"All right. Try it that way. She's said it. Now you look at her. No—no, really look at her—she's *there;* fiendishly glad to have hurt you—don't blink even—visualize her, look at her—look at her until I tell you to stop."

Nearly ten seconds passed.

"Now look at me."

She turned upon him a great pair of injured eyes that were actually blurred with real tears.

"Here! Here!" cried Hedden. "Take this. Here! What do you want—anything I've got!"

Half joking, half in earnest, he flung at her feet his watch, his gold cigarette-case, his wallet filled with bills of large denominations, and all the change in his trouser pockets.

"*She* can cry on purpose! Yes, she can! Didn't you see her!"

Silver was laughing now. Her face was rosy with pleasure and proper pride. And she tried to diminish her achievement by explaining it.

"You just pretend that she's real, and really said it, and you pretend to see her so hard that you really do see her, and then you just can't help crying."

"Yes, that's it," said Hedden with mock levity. "You just pretend. There's nothing more simple."

She knelt and began to hunt in the grass for the valuables which he had thrown at her feet. Having recovered all the larger objects and most of the small silver, she held them out to him in two heaped handfuls.

"I suppose *you* are just pretending, *too?*" she said.

"Unless you care to accept that lot of junk as a month's salary."

"Me?"

"Why not? Silver, why don't you tell your family that *you* are going on the stage and that they can go to the devil? Please observe that when I say that I smile. But why don't you? I'll see you through. So help me! I will."

"Oh, I couldn't," said Silver. They'd *hate* it so. And they've always been just as good as gold to me."

"If they make you hide your light, Silver, they are not being good to you. And you know it."

She sighed, and then wistfully:

"I'd like to. But I *won't.*"

"But if they consented without your taking any stand in the matter? I mean if I told them that you would be a success, and that I would look after you, and they should say: 'Oh, very well!' Then—would you?"

She jumped to her feet. Already, to her active imagination, Hedden had said his say to her parents and they had given their consent.

"You know I would!" she cried.

"Well, Silver," he said, "we don't want to alarm them yet. Let's get our play in shape first. Then some night I'll read it to them and you. Then you'll say good night and beat a retreat, and then I'll wrestle single-handed with the New England conscience. I'll begin by saying: 'I'm going to put that piece on in October, and I want Silver to play the principal part!'"

"But you don't! Me? Honestly?"

She was on fire with excitement.

"Who but you, Silver Sands?" said Hedden gravely.

And he dropped his hand on her further shoulder and gave her the least suggestion of a hug,

and although she twisted quickly away from him, yet in all her life she had never liked any one as much as at that moment she liked McKay Hedden. For he had opened to her wonderful vistas down which she saw herself walking in delightful triumph.

Hedden was silent for some moments. The veins in his forehead appeared red and swollen. When he spoke it was with a distinct effort.

"Would it bore you too much," he said, "to go back to your second entrance?"

VII

SILVER owned a catboat about fifteen feet long. Her father's gift, at considerable financial sacrifice, the sound and pretty little craft had a personality for her. For many days now, owing to Hedden's presence in the house, the *Gopher* had nodded neglected at her moorings, and, owing to recent rains at night, was settling lower and lower in the water. Captain Sands said nothing, but the thought that Silver had already tired of his gift cut his tender heart to the quick. He did not know that Silver herself felt badly about it.

One morning she rose early and, putting on her bathing suit, rowed out to the *Gopher*. It was her intention to pump out the water, spread the sail to dry, put things in order generally, refresh herself with a short swim, and be ready for family breakfast. But a pleasant breeze came ruffling over the morning calm, the rigging of the little boat creaked pleasantly, and upon an impulse Silver cast loose from the moorings, jibed audaciously round the end of the long wharf, and sailed straight away into the intolerable brightness of the rising sun.

Her course passed under the stern of a beautiful white schooner-yacht that had anchored in the bay the night before. Silver read her name, *Aphrodite*, *New York*, in gilt letters, and noted with pleasure the perfect order and whiteness of her decks and the immaculate burning brightness of her brasses.

"When *my* ship comes in," thought Silver, and the *Gopher* had breasted a mile of harbor water before the train of imaginings and aggrandizements thus loosed was interrupted by a faint but cheerful hail.

"Catboat ahoy!"

Silver looked this way and that.

"Off the port bow!"

And now she saw very bright in the sunshine the brown upturned face of a young man floating in the water.

"Want help?" she called.

"If you don't mind."

Silver passed beyond him, and then with a long swing of her tiller brought the *Gopher* into the wind. She "picked up" the swimmer as accurately and gently as if he had been her mooring. He clutched the *Gopher's* low rail with his left hand, and it was at once evident that he could do no more.

"I've hurt my arm," he exclaimed. "I'm afraid I can't get on board without help."

"Drop aft," she said. "And come in over the rudder. I'll help."

It was a hard struggle for both of them, and once the young man groaned sharply; but she got him in at last.

"Where shall I take you?"

"I'm off the *Aphrodite*—the white schooner yonder."

Without comment, Silver dropped the centre-board and began to haul in the main sheet, until the sail filled and the *Gopher* heeled over on the port tack.

"It's mighty good of you," said the young man. "I'm taking you out of your way. My name is Henley."

"Not at all," said Silver. "I wasn't going much farther. How did you hurt yourself?"

"Took a full stroke with my right arm into a heavy piece of floating timber. I suppose I could have gone on floating indefinitely. But I gave up trying to buck the tide. I couldn't make any progress, with one whole arm missing. It's mighty good luck for me that you came along."

"Is your arm broken?"

"No, I'm sure it isn't."

"Shall I put you on board your yacht or take you to a doctor?"

Mr. Henley, having recovered his breath and his equanimity, smiled at her.

"Which would take longer?" he asked.

"I will take you to the yacht," she said severely. "And you can go ashore in your launch."

"I didn't mean to be fresh," he said, and looked so penitent that Silver couldn't help laughing.

"When I swim," she said, "I go against the tide first, and then when you get tired and want to come back you have it to help you."

"I'll remember that," said Henley, "the next time. This *your* boat?"

Silver nodded.

"Some day," he said firmly, "I'm going to have a boat. I love 'em. But I'll have to wait till my ship comes in."

Silver smiled secretly.

"I thought the *Aphrodite* was yours."

Henley glanced at his dark bathing suit.

"If you saw me in my business suit," he said, "three years old, come Epiphany, you'd never mistake me for a millionaire. No. The *Aphrodite* belongs to my boss—a great high and mighty super-overlord by the name of Van Brunt. These bathing suits are great levellers. I'm on my

vacation. Two weeks. I spend all the rest of my time on the island of Manhattan helping Mr. Van Brunt's customers to separate themselves from their money. But it will be fun during the next fifty weeks or so to remember that I was saved from drowning by a girl. I'd always supposed it would be a humiliating thing to have happen to one. But it isn't. It's fine. But I'm glad you didn't have to leap overboard, quiet my frantic struggles with a blow of your fist, and tow me ashore by my back hair."

"Lucky I didn't have to," said Silver. "I couldn't have got hold of your back hair. Why do you cut it so short?"

"Well, for one thing," said he, "if I let it get more than half an inch long it curls in an affected, offensive, and unmanly manner. But I've a better reason. I like to pretend that I'm a British soldier on the road to Mandalay."

"Heads," said Silver. "I'm coming about."

When the *Gopher* had filled lazily (for the wind was failing) on the other tack Silver said: "On the road to where?"

"Mandalay. Don't tell me you don't know all about the road to Mandalay. Why, look here, for two cents I'd sing it to you."

"I haven't got a penny on me," said Silver.

"I'll sing it anyway," said Henley. "Because it's never been done before. I mean I'm the first man that ever lived that wanted to sing a song to a girl before breakfast."

Forthwith he put his head back and sang "Mandalay"—not *for* her, but *to* her, in a charming deep voice, with fire, and with romantic manliness. He looked very handsome as he sang, and when he came to the line—

"I've a neater, sweeter maiden in a cleaner, greener land,"

a sudden thrill went through Silver from head to foot, and the stage and Hedden, and things that were not full of youth, and yearning, and romance, seemed far-off things and worthless.

"And I should very much like to know how that song strikes you?" said Henley.

She did not answer for some moments, and the wise youth fell to studying the set of the *Gopher's* sail. Then Silver said: "It's the most beautiful song I ever heard and you sang it just right."

After a short silence, Henley pointed to the *Aphrodite*, now a short hundred yards off the port bow.

"Do you see that yacht?" he said. "Do you know what's the matter with her? She's too *near*. I wish the wind had stayed down where it was put. I wish the speed of the tide would increase to twenty-five knots. I've had such a bully sail, and now it's almost over, and I haven't even been clever enough to find out your name."

"My name is Silver Sands," she said.

"Once more, please. Silver Sands. I don't believe it. It's too good to be true. . . . And if you don't live in the square white house with the blue-angel-blowing-a-gilt-trumpet weather-vane I'll be terribly upset."

"But I do!" exclaimed Silver.

"And," said he, "when young gentlemen, whom you have rescued from a watery grave, come to call, are you generally at home? Because the *Aphrodite*—sink her! How near she is!—will remain in port for three days—and you couldn't be 'not at home' all that time, could you?"

"But—" began Silver.

"You mean we haven't been introduced. True. I hadn't thought of that. Kindly sail me back to where you found me and let me jump overboard, and drift quietly out to sea. I wouldn't have it get out for the world that you saved an ut-

ter stranger from drowning. Poor Mrs. Grundy would have a terrible fit. And that you let him talk to you afterward—and sing to you. . . . So it's good-by, is it?"

He tried to hold out his right hand but could not. The pain made him frown slightly.

"It doesn't matter," he said. "I never met you. We never met, Miss Sands and I. But I will bet, that we shall yet, and don't forget——"

"Heads!" she exclaimed, and he ducked only in time to keep from being brained by the *Gopher's* boom.

"You are very silly," said she.

"I wonder."

"You needn't."

"But I do. I wonder if I'm silly or if I'm very wise. If you'd had as many things happen to you this morning as I've had happen to me——"

And he looked her straight and very earnestly in the eyes.

"I'm coming to call at four o'clock," he said.

"And I'm sorry I shall be out."

He shrugged his shoulders, and looked at once hurt and a little contemptuous.

"But," she continued placidly, "if you could wait till five——"

And at that he burst out into a joyous laugh.

VIII

AT breakfast Silver told of her adventure. "Such a nice young man, mum," she said patronizingly. "And he's coming at five o'clock to thank me."

Hedden looked disappointed.

"I thought we were going to explore the old whaler on the bar?" he said.

"So we are," said Silver. "But we didn't say at five. We didn't even say to-day."

"Oh, it doesn't matter," said Hedden. "Only—" And then, realizing perhaps that nothing was to be gained by acting like a spoiled child, he made a swift and agreeable change of subject. But after breakfast, before going upstairs to his work, he apologized to Silver.

"But it's your fault," he said. "You've been so nice to me, always ready to show me around, or to help me, that I've gotten into the habit of feeling that I own a monopoly of your time, never stopping to realize that even the most accommodating people like, if only once in a great while, to be at their own disposition."

Silver smiled.

"You don't pull beautiful young men out of the water every day, do you?" she asked.

"You do not," said Hedden, "fortunately. And is he really beautiful?"

"He's the best-looking thing you ever saw," she assured him. "And the strongest, without being clumsy, and the best made. I think he must have rowed on some college crew. That's the sort of build he's got. One year there were half a dozen of the Harvard crew down here, to visit Billy Cousins who was coxswain, right after beating Yale, and they used to go in swimming all in a bunch off the long wharf, and we kids used to sit around, with our thumbs in our mouths, and think in our secret hearts that they couldn't really be human beings—that they were a sort of Amphibious God."

"What does your rescuee do for a living? Is he a young Crœsus, 'Young, insolent, and splendid,' or could we persuade him to play the figurehead that comes to life in 'When My Ship Comes In?'"

Silver clapped her hands with pleasure. "Don't tell me you're really going to bring the figurehead to life—like you said!"

"The more I think of the notion the better I

like it. But of course it mustn't be magic. The audience mustn't be fooled. Only *you* must be fooled. . . . Silver, we've got a great show."

"It seems wonderful to me; but of course *you know*. I wish you'd tell me how you got the idea."

"I wouldn't tell anybody but you. They'd think I was posing, trying to pretend that I was something I'm not. As a matter of fact, except for certain details like the figurehead, and like the blind captain's change of heart, the whole thing came to me in a flash—as at night, when there is sudden lightning, you will see every detail of a village more clearly and more thoroughly than if you had a whole afternoon of daylight to study them in."

"Isn't that inspiration?"

"I don't know what you call it," said Hedden modestly. "But that's the way it works."

And he went up-stairs feeling that he had undone much of the impression created by the Amphibious God whom Silver had pulled out of the harbor.

. . . . . .

Promptly at five o'clock, Mr. Henley lifted the brass knocker of the square white house in which Silver lived, and let it fall. He was dressed

in white flannel and white tennis shoes; on his left coat sleeve was a mourning band; his right arm was in a sling.

Silver opened the door, and smiled at him from the dark hallway. Ever since half past four her pulse had been beating more quickly than usual. But she had had the good sense to make no unusual toilet for the occasion. She wore a sailor blouse over a white duck skirt, tan stockings, patent-leather pumps, her silver boatswain's whistle on a white braided lanyard, and she wore a scarlet ribbon in her hair.

"How's the arm?" she asked.

Henley wanted to say: "You look desperately young; but I've fallen in love with you just the same." But he didn't. He said: "Oh, it's coming along" and "How was your appetite for breakfast?"

"I have been eating all day," she said. "But it hasn't spoiled my appetite for tea."

"Are you going to give me tea? I don't believe it!"

"*And* cinnamon toast, and crawlers, and chocolate if you like it better than tea. And I hope you do, because I whipped the cream. We'll sit in the parlor, and please don't sit down hard because it shakes the walrus teeth on the mantel,

and if they fell and broke the captain would never get over it."

"What captain?"

"My father."

Henley tiptoed to the mantelpiece and examined the walrus teeth. Some long-dead sailorman with a real feeling for art and good workmanship had mounted each of the pair on a little square pedestal of inlaid woods. Upon the ivories themselves, now mottled with rich yellow, he had scrimshawed, in paled, faded colors a pair of Samoan dancing girls, with large goggle eyes and high-heeled French dancing slippers.

"The ones I saw," said Henley, "didn't wear slippers. I remember because they danced round a fire of driftwood to keep off the mosquitoes. Paæuaa, who was the fattest and consequently the most beautiful, stepped on a hot coal—and her next step must have been a good twenty feet —straight up."

"And when were you a sailor?"

"Meaning that I hardly knew enough to duck my head when the main boom swings over? Well, I sailed before the mast, and as you know the boom is always behind it——"

"You didn't really—did you?"

"I certainly did. Otherwise I'd be a day-

laborer in Hong Kong to this day. You see, my mamma gave me a sum of money to take me around the world, and when I got to Hong Kong I found to my horror and surprise that I'd spent all of it. So I shipped before the mast, honestly I did, way out in front of it—and to this day my friends call me Swimbad the Sailor. They do this for two reasons—first because in all modesty I swim rather better than most people, and second because my friends are all very fresh and funny."

She offered him a dish filled with cinnamon toast.

"She thinks I talk too much," Henley complained. "She's trying to gag me——"

There was a sound of footsteps in the hall. Silver looked up with a slight frown. It was rather mean of "Hedden," she thought, to come "butting in."

But he made every excuse. He said that he had been working at fourth speed since lunch, that he was completely exhausted, etc., etc., and asked for a cup of tea as a necessity rather than as a luxury. As a matter of record, he had spent the entire afternoon on a sofa, reading, smoking, and dozing.

Silver introduced the two men to each other. "It's Mr. Paul Henley, isn't it?" said Hedden, and he turned to Silver.

"We shook hands one night at the Lambs' Club after a gambol."

"Correct," said Henley.

"You told me something about a play you were writing."

"I afterward sent it to you, and you sent it back."

And Henley laughed, but not heartily.

"I remember—I remember," said Hedden. "And I think I sent you a letter of advice. I wonder if you followed it."

"I did," said Henley grimly. "I threw the thing into a raging fire created for the purpose——"

"And I hope you then sat down and began to write another play?"

"I did," said Henley.

It was all Hedden could do to keep from laughing. It is never pleasant to be sued for stealing, especially when you actually have stolen. But in this case there could now be no suit, since Henley had been so stupid as first not to know that he had written a cracking good play and second to destroy it.

"He's burned his best evidence," thought Hedden. Aloud he said: "Another lump, please, hostess, and I leave you."

He was in a real hurry now. He wanted to get somewhere where he could laugh.

"When the new piece is finished, Henley," he said in a kind voice, "send it in. Your first, for all its crudeness, interested me—truly." And he left them.

"Tell me about your play," said Silver. "I'm crazy about plays."

Now every young man is embarrassed, more or less, to have it disclosed, in the presence of a young woman, that he has written an unproducible play. But Henley, much as he wished the subject changed, was still game to make sport at his own expense.

"I will tell you the story of all my other crimes," he said. "Once I murdered an old man for the gold fillings in his teeth, once I roasted a Jew in front of a fire to make him say where his money was hidden, once I threw a little boy off the roof of an apartment-house just to see if he would burst—but to tell you about my play would really make me uncomfortable and ashamed."

"Do you ever stop joking?"

He looked her steadily in the eyes.

"I'd stop right now—if I dared."

IX

"MR. HEDDEN is a very old friend of my father and mother," said Silver. "And *that's* how he happens to be staying with us."

Henley had persuaded her to take him for a sail in the upper bay. They were to land, cross to the ocean beach, and tell each other, I suppose, what they thought of the ocean. Henley, you may be sure, would say that he was "amazed at its size."

It was his last day. The *Aphrodite* was to sail the next morning at dawn. Hanleytown would be a memory. He wondered if Silver Sands would ever be just a memory to him. "She's too young to think of marrying," he thought. "But she's so beautiful and rare that some utterly worthless and undeserving man is almost sure to gobble her up between now and my next vacation. I wonder what Hedden's game is? . . ."

"He's one of the most interesting men on Broadway," said Henley. "He'll take a play

that isn't much good and stage it so beautifully and realistically that even the critics are fooled. And he certainly can teach people to act. He's got genius."

He wanted to go on, and tell her more about Hedden; how, for all his real talent, he was supposed to be a thief, a liar, and a man absolutely without moral sense; and what to Henley's mind was almost worse, a man whose every word and gesture was an affectation. But it did not seem fair to say these things about her father's guest, about a man whom she herself obviously admired and believed in.

"When winter comes," he asked, "what do you do? Whom do you play with?"

"In winter," said Silver, "I am a wholly admirable person. I forswear current novels and read literature. We have a literary club and a dramatic club. I knit a given number of socks and sweaters for charity. When the ponds freeze over we skate. When there is snow we say what fun it would be to coast if there were any hills. On New Year's Day, no matter what the weather is, six of us go in swimming off the long wharf. It's horrible. And of course there's lots of going to church, and Sunday-school classes, and carrying baskets of delicacies to the sick. And the nights

are long and dark as years; and sometimes old sea-captains drop in and swap stories. Talk about Jonah! There isn't a man in Hanleytown, over sixty years of age, who hasn't been bitten in two by whales—often."

The *Gopher* was passing close to that wooded point where Hedden and Silver had their outdoor workroom, among the scrub-oaks.

"What a bully place for a house!" exclaimed Henley. "When my ship comes in I shall buy it and build. Please couldn't we land and explore? We could tie up to that ruined wharf and scramble ashore somehow."

For some reason or other Silver Sands did not tell him that she and Hedden often tied up to that particular wharf and scrambled ashore. She chose perhaps to regard her friendship with Hedden as the business side, the serious side of her life, whereas Henley was a sort of holiday.

Exciting and flattering as it was to be in Hedden's confidence and to be booked, if all went well, to play the leading part in "When My Ship Comes In," it was more downright fun to explore the scrub-oak grove with Henley, and to see a country house come into being under his enthusiastic and playful imagination.

At last they penetrated to the windless glade where Silver and Hedden did their experimenting and rehearsing, and Henley cried:

"I was worried about where the garden should be. Behold it! We come from the house by this path and we look into the glade—it won't be a garden to walk in—it will just be a mass of color in a wood, larkspur and phlox, and we'll fill the place with a mist of water from hidden nozzles, and there will always be wonderful rainbows and things——"

He found and picked up a cigarette butt. Upon the butt, printed in Prussian blue, were the initials M. H.

"M. H.," said Henley. "McKay Hedden, I bet a million."

"Yes," said Silver. "He comes here a lot."

"With you?"

Somehow she hated to answer.

"He reads me his new play," she said, "and makes me pose around as if I was the different characters."

But the grove was spoiled for Henley. His country house, his gardens, his boat-house, all quite real a minute ago, with Silver Sands presiding over them, vanished.

"Let's put to sea again," he said. "Men don't

leave tracks on the water. And I that thought no one had entered this grove since the Indians! Let's go. If we don't something tells me that I shall find egg-shells and beer-bottles."

He preceded her out of the grove, pretending to cover his eyes with his left hand. Suddenly he turned. A question had suddenly formulated in his mind, not in sequence to any train of thought, but springing up fully armed from heaven knows where.

"You're not thinking of going on the stage, are you?"

"Yes," said Silver firmly. "But it's a secret from my father and mother. I'll never do it without their permission. And I don't believe they'll ever give me that. They don't even like me to be in the Hanleytown dramatic club."

"Thank you for telling me," said Henley. "It was impertinent of me to ask such a question. But somehow I can't help being interested about you, and wanting you to have the very best of everything."

"You don't approve of the stage?"

"I love it better than anything else. I work nights trying to write plays. And some day, God help me, I'm going to put over something good. But nine girls out of ten, or more than that, who

go on the stage don't come to any happiness. On the other hand——"

"That's the hand *I'm* interested in," said Silver.

"Are you? Wait and see. On the other hand, if you go on the stage, it will bring you to New York, and then to-night I wouldn't have to say 'Good-by.' I could say 'So long. See you later.'"

They regained the *Gopher* and pursued their way toward the narrow bar of sand which protected the upper bay from the onslaught of the ocean.

"Of course," said Henley out of a clear sky, "my life belongs to you——"

"Stop *saying* that I saved your life. You don't think it."

"Well, I was helpless, and I was drifting out to sea as fast as I could. It's an even bet. Nobody was about, except you. Of course I was far from drowning when you helped me, but if you hadn't come——"

"Or if some one else just as good hadn't come!"

"Anyway," he said, "I like to think that you saved my life."

"Really? Why?"

"Because I like the idea that it belongs to you. I've been thinking a lot since you pulled me out

of the water. And it all boils down to this: that I've got to go away to-morrow at dawn and that I don't want to."

"I think I like you best," said Silver, "when you joke about everything."

"It must have been terrible in the old whaling days," said he. "A young fellow who'd just signed to go on a four or five years' voyage would suddenly see the prettiest girl in the world, and get as far as wanting to tell her so, and then, presto!—off to the Arctic, the Antarctic, the South Seas—five years of it—and maybe all the time eating his heart out wondering what had become of the girl."

"In those old days," said Silver, "it was the fashion for girls to be faithful. Mr. Hedden is writing a play about it——"

And she remembered that she was not to say anything about the play, that she must not even mention the title to a "living soul."

"And nowadays that isn't the fashion? I don't believe that hearts have changed—only that the modern girl's sense of obligation sits lighter on her. If she has a change of heart, she feels at liberty to break her contract—no matter how the man feels."

"All girls aren't like that," said Silver.

"I know it," said he, "and I thank God for it. *You* aren't—for one?"

"Who knows?" said Silver.

"*I* know. That's enough people. If I were going on a five years' voyage and you promised to wait for me and be faithful—you'd wait and you'd be faithful."

"Maybe," said Silver. "But I'd do a lot of thinking before I promised."

Then they both laughed.

"When does Hedden go back to Broadway?"

"He's going to finish his play. And then he's going to talk to the captain and my mother, and try to persuade them to let me be in it."

"I'd love to know what's decided."

"Really? Then I'll write and tell you."

"Good girl. Truly? Would you mind if I wrote to you once in a while? I'd like to tell you from time to time what I'm doing with the life you——"

"Never mind what I did with your life. But I'd love to hear what you are doing with it."

"Truly?"

She looked very solemn and crossed her heart.

"And if," said Henley, "I hear that you are going to stay here, I'll be glad. And if I hear that you are coming to New York, I'll be glad. On

the chance of the latter event I shall begin at once to save all my salary so that there may be expensive doings. Oh, Lord, wouldn't it be fun to be rich! Tell me, honestly, what will your family say?"

"If they say yes, it will be a miracle."

"And you've set your heart on their saying it?"

"I suppose so."

"And you'll be terribly disappointed if they don't?"

Silver Sands had a beautiful quality of honesty. For some reason she wished to answer him with an unshaded truth. The best she could manage was this:

"I won't be as disappointed as I would have been."

Whether Henley understood her precise meaning or not is unknown. At least his heart began to beat faster, and he looked quickly away from her.

. . . . . .

They waded heavily through the thick sand and sparse vegetation of the dunes, until suddenly the ocean was spread before them—waveless, shipless, birdless to the horizon.

"Well," said Silver, "there it is. What do you think of it?"

And Henley, with complete seriousness, assured her, as we have foreseen, that he was amazed at its size.

Then suddenly shading his eyes with his left hand, and looking straight out: "Do you know," he asked, "what country is right opposite us?"

"England?"

"Wrong. Go to the foot. Spain is opposite. And do you know what I see?"

"A castle in Spain?"

"Go back to the head!"

X

"I HAVEN'T seen much of you lately," said Hedden. "Quite a lot has happened since you took to fishing demigods out of the water. I've ripped the scene before the church up the back, and it mustn't be a swift that the cabin-boy makes for her on the long voyage; it must be a busk."

"Of course," said Silver; "how stupid of us! The best she could do with a swift would be to screw it to her sewing-table; but she could sew the busk into the front of her dress, as all the girls did, and then it could always be close to her heart."

"Precisely," said Hedden; "and I thought this, too. Let the cabin-boy have all the ingenuity and patience of the usual sailor-artist and worker in bone and ivory, but let him have in addition an Italian genius for form and color; let his work be worthy of a real master, so that when the bark *Phœnix* (I have decided on *Phœnix* because that is the bird which rises from its ashes) starts on her last voyage the audience will know that the

world is going to lose a Raphael. . . . Now, how do you think this would do for the captain's lines when he tells her about the cabin-boy's death? I should explain that the cabin-boy is to be the captain's nephew, that on *shore* the captain is the favorite uncle of all his nieces and nephews—they climb on his knee and pull his beard and so forth and so on—but that at sea he is the sternest of disciplinarians. Well, the captain says: 'How could I know that he was injured internally; that he was dying? He called to me, "Uncle Robert—Uncle Robert," and I said, "Boy—you have no uncle on this ship." Then he crep' away into the foc's'le and died all alone.'"

The cabin-boy had grown under Hedden's hands from a comic figure into a tragic. He was very real to Silver, and she sighed.

"I wish you could spare him," she said.

"I can't," said Hedden with the positiveness of fate. "Now, Silver, there's a difficulty. This is where you can help. I don't care what I spend, but the properties of 'When My Ship Comes In' must be the real thing. Everything needed is to be found right here in Hanleytown—quadrants, spy-glasses, walking-sticks of whalebone and ivory, swifts, busks, jagging-knives, lamps for burning whale-oil, silver spectacles with square eyepieces,

'baccy-boxes, etc. I can send up my scene-painter and get the church and the doorways and the wharfs and the ships, but the other things come hard. The people whom I've talked to who own such things won't sell. But there must be others who will. Now, you know everybody in Hanley-town, and I'll give you carte blanche to buy up what you can. I want the parlor in the prologue to be an absolutely perfect reproduction of a top-notch whaling captain's parlor—only we'll lay the ivories on thick; it takes a lot of whale and walrus teeth to strike a whole color note on a scale as large as the average Broadway stage. Now, will you get busy on this?"

"I know a lot of things that could be bought," said Silver. "I think it's only where they've always been in the family that the owners really care about them."

In the doorway Hedden turned, smiling as if upon a sudden thought.

"Silver," he said abruptly, "a prize-fighter goes into strict training for weeks and weeks before a fight; so a horse before a race; so a college boy before a football game. Now all these things are child's play to acting. You must regard me as your trainer. Can you do that?"

"I think so."

And she smiled up at him, wondering what he was going to say next.

"Then," said he, "keep your eyes in the boat. Better, keep your eyes and your mind all the time on your ship—that's *bound* to come in, if only you concentrate hard enough. Don't go scooting off on side issues."

"Please tell me what I've done?"

"You haven't done anything. I'm telling you what not to do."

"Not very definitely."

"Well, then—don't fall in love."

With that he left her.

Silver Sands moved slowly to a window and stood looking out at the yachts and catboats with which the near-by waters of the harbor bristled. Until Hedden's half-joking, half-earnest admonition it had not occurred to her that she could fall in love with anybody. She was too young, and self-centred thoughts were so interesting.

Gradually from among the yachts her eyes singled out the beautiful white hull of the *Aphrodite*, and after that saw no other.

They had said good-by—not even "So long—see you later." When she waked the next morning, supposing that she ever managed to go to sleep at all, he would be gone; a day or two and

he would have forgotten her. Yes. Hedden was right. The play was the thing; she must keep her eyes in the boat.

One single knock fell sharply upon the front door and set Silver's sad heart to beating more quickly. Being without affectation, she ran to the door and opened it swiftly.

Henley's face was pale and grave.

"I *had* to see you again," he said. "I kept thinking: 'I'm going away; I'm going away.' And there wasn't any future to that. And so I had to come. I came," he said, "to undo that good-by of ours. I came to say 'So long—see you later.' If you don't come to New York soon—Silver Sands—I'm coming back here. I'll have to fix it somehow."

He stepped into the dark hall and shut the door behind him. Silver was unable to speak. For some reason she was deeply moved; her heart fluttered in her breast like a caught bird—a "cot" bird, she would have said. And though she stood her ground, her great eyes had, you may say, a sort of "backing away" look.

"I *had* to come," he said. "I had to."

Then he smiled with great gentleness, and there was quite a long silence.

"Shouldn't I have come?"

"I don't know."

"I've only one good arm at the moment," he said; "if I don't put it round you I think I'll just die. Silver——"

The sound arm slid into place. And all of a sudden her tense body seemed to relax and grow soft, and near. Her head drooped on his shoulder like a flower wilting, and he kissed her and kissed her.

Then his right arm came out of its sling and folded about her. And he was not conscious of any agony.

If they had had thoughts of anything in this world but each other, they might have heard from the top of the stair an exclamation of anger —and of disgust, mixed perhaps with a sudden green note of jealousy.

"Why," whispered Henley, "she belongs to me. She's *my* girl; she's *my* dear."

"Are you mine, too?"

And at that he smiled and smiled and told her with ecstatic levity that she had just won an argument.

There was no time to talk about the future. Captain Sands's heavy feet could be heard coming up the brick walk to the door. Mrs. Sands was about to emerge from the kitchen on a tour

of lamplighting. Hedden might come down the stair at any moment.

"We're going out to-night, dear," said Henley swiftly, "instead of in the morning. My boss has had a telegram, and——"

"I don't want you to be sailing at night."

"There will be a moon—and, besides, nothing can happen to me now—nothing."

And he kissed her once more.

And then Captain Sands began to open the front door, Mrs. Sands began to come out of the kitchen, and McKay Hedden began to come down the stair. They were in time to hear Henley saying:

"It's been a great pleasure, and thank you for all your kindness. I'd have been bored stiff if it hadn't been for you."

It wasn't a very satisfactory parting; but she went with him as far as the gate.

"When do you start?"

"They're getting up the sails now."

"I'll put a candle in my window."

"And I'll watch it till I can't see it any more."

"If the night turns foggy, I'll die of worry. *Please* say that you'll take care of yourself. Couldn't you sleep in a life-preserver?"

"To-night? I couldn't sleep if they filled me with opium."

"It isn't as if you had the use of both your arms . . . why, you've taken it out of its sling! Put it back at once, sir! . . ."

"Only because it's of no use out here in the street—the street of Many Eyes. Why do they call it that?"

"Because the mothers, and the wives, and the sweethearts used to sit at those windows and look toward Cape Hope to see their ships come in. But nowadays they just use the windows to make lovers uncomfortable."

"I've *got* to go, dear. God bless and keep you."

"God bless and keep *you*. But you'll write—say you'll write?"

"Do I have to *say* it?"

And they laughed for pure happiness.

. . . . . .

Silver sat at her window by a lighted candle, her eyes upon the receding sails of the *Aphrodite*. Already the moon was rising. And the Lord had never made a safer or more exquisite night for sailing. The wind blew steadily and not hard from the southwest. The flashings of the Cape Hope Light—three white flashes with intervals of

ten seconds, and then a red flash—could be seen for twenty miles. No ship putting out of harbor ever ran less risk of sudden storms or collisions than the *Aphrodite*, but for all that, when the yacht's sails and lights had vanished at last, Silver Sands knelt by her narrow white bed, and said the prayer for those in peril on the deep, and burst into a storm of weeping.

XI

AS Silver sat by the candle watching the *Aphrodite* sail away into the moonlight, her ears ought to have tingled. On board the receding schooner two gentlemen, one with his right arm in a sling, the other, and older, with his mustaches turned up like the German Emperor's (much as peach-trees are trained against walls in the Old World) were talking about her.

"So that's how you've been spending your time!" said Van Brunt.

"That first morning," said Henley, "the minute I heard her voice, even before I'd seen her, I knew that something definite and important had happened to me. And when she leaned out to help me into her boat and I had a good look at her, I said to myself: 'That is the girl I am going to marry.'"

And he laughed happily.

"I saw her that first morning myself," said Van Brunt.

"You did? Where?"

"You passed under my stateroom ports. I was shaving, so I couldn't come out. But I looked out and cut myself."

"God bless you!" exclaimed Henley. "I always said you had the best eye!"

"But, Paul, you're not in a position to marry. And I've only one thing to say: don't marry till you are. Wait till you see enough money coming in steadily. You have no idea how much it costs to keep house nowadays, and marriage isn't any good in the long run if you don't keep house."

"Of course," said Henley, "there's no future for me in Wall Street. I'm ashamed to take what you pay me as it is."

"Don't be," said Van Brunt, "you're worth your wages and more; but no man can go in for any career that doesn't call out the very best that he has in him. Now I had the makings of an ideal broker. I'm not boasting. To understand and grasp so simple a business I had to strain my small brain to the breaking-point. That's why I've gotten on. I was always trying to do something that was a little too hard for me. Of course, in addition, I knew enough to be honest, and to keep my mouth shut, even when intoxicated. Now you've got a different kind of a brain. What took all of my mental powers to accomplish makes

hardly any call on yours. I'm speaking very frankly. It's like playing tennis every day with a man to whom you can give thirty. He will improve, but you won't. On the contrary, you'll play down to his level, and if you keep it up long enough you'll ruin your game.

"It's your personality that's useful to me, not your work. You know everybody and everybody likes you. That means customers for me. Now I'll always have a job for you, but if I were you I wouldn't be satisfied with that."

"I'm not," said Henley; "I'd rather do plays than anything else. But as nobody seems to think them worth producing . . ."

"Of course," said Van Brunt, "if you want to take a chance, I'll put up the money. You can always buy a production."

Henley shook his head.

"I have faith in the managers," he said; "they make mistakes, but they don't do it on purpose."

"I've another proposition," said Van Brunt. "It's what's hurrying us back to town."

"The Lost Mines?"

"There's a career for you."

"Ex-pound."

"What are you looking at?"

"A light in a window."

Van Brunt laughed softly, and reached in his pocket for a cigar.

"I've spent a hundred and fifty thousand dollars in developing those mines," he said. "And now that they are in condition to pay, Mexico bursts into a dozen revolutions, and I'm expecting every day to hear that my plant has been destroyed and that I've lost my money. Griffin, the manager, stood up to half a dozen threatening letters, and then lost his nerve and skedaddled. I don't blame him. Now Tallant, the tennis-player, has interests next door to mine. He proposes to go down and protect them. You could do the same for mine. You would have to pick up a dozen or twenty cowboys this side of the Rio Grande, sneak them into Mexico between days, live off the country, fortify the mines, and hold them. I shouldn't expect you to work them. But you might try. It's a wild country—plenty of pig and deer and quail and lions. . . . Now if you can keep my interests and improvements unhurt until it's safe to do business in Mexico, I'll give you a quarter interest in the Lost Mines."

"When do I start?" asked Henley simply. And there was a great surge of joy in his heart.

"If this wind holds," said Van Brunt, "we'll make New Bedford in a couple of hours. We'll

motor to Providence and make the best connections for New York that we can. I've telegraphed for accommodations on the midnight train from Boston and on the one o'clock. You'll outfit tomorrow morning and start for San Antonio in the afternoon."

"In that case," said Henley, "I'd better go below and write my letters now."

"Letters?"

"*Letter.*"

Van Brunt laughed softly.

"If you don't mind, tell Gasaki to bring me a pint of champagne in a tall glass with mint. Better join me."

But Henley only laughed and went below whistling loudly:

"The lips that touch liquor shall never touch mine."

It was at this moment that Silver Sands was beginning to pray for those in peril on the deep.

XII

IT is possible that without interference McKay Hedden might have lost interest in Silver Sands. Even he could not train her into a dramatic star without the exercise of much labor and patience. He had sounded her parents and they were utterly opposed to her going on the stage. And she herself, he was convinced, would never set their authority at defiance. It seemed wisest to pigeonhole the new play, to sail away on the *Buskin*, and trust to Providence to provide him with a new star.

Furthermore, there remained of the new play only the stern and difficult parts. And Hedden was not the man to arrive at results by steady toil. He could, upon an impulse, work all around the clock; but he could not work eight hours a day for a month. Already the vivid newness of "When My Ship Comes In" had worn off, so that his mind was jaded with the subject.

But the advent of Paul Henley had acted upon him like a strong stimulant. For the leading motive of his life had been jealousy. The mere

fact of something more or less desirable being owned outright by some one else had always given him a fierce desire to make that very thing his own, by theft, by barter, or even by hard work. It was not alone the excellence of Henley's play that had caused him to steal it, it had seemed pitiable to him that so valuable a property should belong to any one but himself.

And so with Silver Sands.

He had heard and seen enough from the top of the stairs to rouse his sense of covetousness. "First Henley owns my play," he thought, "and then he owns my star. Whatever his rights may have been to the first, to the second he has none. I discovered her."

And from this time on McKay Hedden regarded Silver Sands in a new light. He still coveted her as a money-making proposition. But he coveted her more because she was beautiful and innocent. And he coveted that keen, if inexcusable, homage which the well-known lady-killer receives even from the virtuous. To have written and produced "When My Ship Comes In," to have discovered a new star, and to be known as her "protector" by those on the inside, and all this in one season, would fill his cap with bright feathers. The mere ruin of a life presented no

obstacle to his conscience. He had none, like the great Napoleon. Anything for money, power, and self-gratification.

It would have been interesting to have asked Hedden questions to which, either by divine pressure or by torture, he would have been obliged to return absolutely truthful answers.

Do you fear any retribution except that which is provided by man and his laws?

No.

If A steals B's play, is that wicked?

Yes.

But if you steal B's play?

It isn't wicked.

Would it be wrong for you to ruin a girl?

Not for me.

Can you do wrong?

I cannot. I am above the law, above morality, above religion. I am the most wonderful person that ever lived. Men ought to be grateful to me for considering their work worth appropriating. A girl of any sense whatever should consider being my mistress one of the highest honors attainable.

Are you afraid of anything? Are you afraid of God?

No.

Of hell?

No.

What are you afraid of, then?

I am afraid of fines and imprisonment.

I am afraid of having my face punched.

I am afraid of having my hide horsewhipped.

I am afraid of weapons, of violent men who imagine that I have wronged them.

Do you, when all is said and done, consider yourself virtuous, a good citizen—in short, a noble character?

I do. . . .

Henley's coming, then, had furnished him with a new impulse—jealousy. Silver Sands herself was to furnish him with another.

The day after Henley's departure she said:

"Mr. Hedden, I don't think I want to go on the stage any more."

"You don't? Oh, very well, it won't be the first time I've wasted on people who don't know their own minds. And I don't suppose it will be the last."

He turned his back on her then and marched violently out of the house. And she ran after him, and called to him, and he pretended to be deaf, and kept on marching, and showing her the receding back of a greatly injured man.

It is a pity, perhaps, that his behavior did

not act upon her sense of the ridiculous. During his silly dudgeon she ought to have read his spoiled-child character clearly and lost all her awe of him. That she did not must be attributed to the tenderness of her heart.

She watched to see which turn he would make from Water Street—the street of Many Eyes—and having seen, started around the block in the opposite direction and at a quick trot to head him off. And it so happened that they met face to face in front of a vacant house standing in an umbrageous and unkempt yard.

"Mr. Hedden— Aren't you going to speak to me?"

Taken by surprise, the manager clapped a hand to his forehead with a dramatic gesture and exclaimed:

"You!"

"I was afraid I'd hurt your feelings. I didn't mean to, and so I headed you off to tell you, and——"

"Mine," said Hedden, "is a position of great isolation. If I allowed myself to have feelings that could be hurt I should long ago have perished of sheer pain. And yet you *have* managed to hurt me, Silver. I counted on you. It seems to me that you and I were in an alliance to show

the world a great play greatly played. But it seems that on your part the whole thing has been a mere 'pour passer le temps.' "

"I don't know what that last means," said Silver, "but it wasn't any whim. I was terribly in earnest and excited about it. And then I got more excited about something else."

And she flushed a rich rose under her clear tan.

"How like a woman!" exclaimed Hedden. "And may I ask what you have found more exciting to your imagination than a great Broadway success? To my mind, short of a great naval or military triumph there is nothing to equal that. But then I am a plain, straightforward, mere man—with a mere man's point of view. What new thing has come into your life, Silver?"

It was not easy for her to tell him. She leaned against the ruined gate of the deserted dwelling, and looked at the ground.

"Surely," said Hedden, "you ought not to come to a definite conclusion affecting your whole life on the strength of a three days' acquaintance. Is it Paul Henley who has changed your mind for you?"

"He said he didn't like the stage for a girl,"

she said stoutly, "but on the other hand he said that he would like for me to be in New York."

"Well," said Hedden, and he spread his hands in a Semitic gesture. "There you are!"

And he, too, leaned upon the ruined gate and looked at the ground.

"And you are really in love with him?"

"Yes."

There was a long silence, and then Hedden, in a dramatic whisper, more to himself than to her, mumbled:

"My God, what have I done to deserve this? I ask you, what?"

And then he lifted his eyes to Silver's troubled face and spoke swiftly:

"Do you think it was only to make a star of you that I have stayed on and on in Hanleytown? A jumping-off place of the world from which all initiation, all play of mind, all ambition, all broad-mindedness have long since jumped? Do you think I have lavished and squandered my humble talents on 'When My Ship Comes In' merely for art's sake? I have written it for you. I have put my whole heart in it. For it seemed to me that because of your extreme youth all other channels of expression were denied me. But others have not respected

your youth—others have felt that it was legitimate and manly to play upon your feelings. If that right exists for another, it exists for me. And I love you, Silver, not as boys love but as men love. I loved you from the first moment that I saw you! Ay, and before that. I loved you thousands of years ago—in Babylon, when I was a king and you a Christian slave. My God—my God, what have I done to deserve this?"

He stepped impulsively toward her, and something in his expression caused her to give ground. Hedden felt rather than saw that the old lilac bushes along the yard fence now screened him from prying eyes. "What do you *know* of love, you—little beauty?" he said, his face red as fire. Silver did not take another step backward. And though she trembled with a vague fear, her great blue eyes regarded him with an extraordinary brave steadiness. If she had shown fear, like the coward he was, Hedden might not easily have mastered his sudden passion. A moment they stood thus. Then the color went out of the man's face, and it was he who took a step backward.

"Forgive me, Silver," he said. "And unless it should please you to remember that I, too, loved you, forget what I have said. We shall

talk no more of my love—you and I. See"—and he made a twisting gesture with his right hand—"I lock the secret in my heart, whence it issued for a moment, only to find that it had lain hidden too long, too long. And yet I would have leashed my winged soul and given it into your keeping. For you I would have worked the flesh from my fingers. Together we should have gone far—far. Well, my dear, for you there is the high noon of your new happiness—for me, too, there shall be this happiness—that I shall renounce without capitulation to bitterness, to envy, to uncharitableness. Silver, my dear, do you pray?"

She nodded.

"Then pray for poor McKay Hedden—pray God to help him play the man."

And he smiled upon her with great brilliance, believing secretly in his heart that he resembled a male angel.

"And I ought to tell you," he said, "that I think your young man is a beautiful young man, a worthy young man, and I intend so to live that he shall one day call me—friend."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Silver, "that you feel about me the way you do. But I think you've been fine about it. And you've been so

good to me that I wouldn't have hurt you for the world, if I could have helped it. But I couldn't help it, could I? Say I couldn't."

He distended his lungs with air and held himself very erect, and looked very manly—stage manly.

"You could not," he said, "and may God bless you and make you happy. . . . And now will you forgive me—if I run away? The battle's too hot for me just now, Silver. I was surprised by the enemy in great force and I must go somewhere alone—to reform my lines—to renew my courage."

And with an abrupt wave of a shapely hand he turned and left her.

Silver found a hidden seat under a pear-tree heavy with green fruit. Before witnesses she might have kept countenance indefinitely; but alone, screened from all eyes, she broke down and cried like a little child, grinding her fists into her eyes.

And this was a pity, because later when she called at the post-office it was to learn that Mr. Hedden had already collected the mail, his own and that of the Sands family. It was also a pity that Silver did not ask the postmaster if there had been a letter for her.

There had been, and in sorting the mail Hedden had recognized Paul Henley's hand on the private-signalled stationery of the *Aphrodite*. But he, fearing lest Silver might make a particular inquiry at the post-office, did not at once open, read, and destroy it. All the rest of the day and evening he carried it carelessly in his jacket pocket; whence he could produce it at a moment's notice, in case Silver should say:

"But the postmaster *said* there was a letter for me. He noticed it particularly because Mr. Van Brunt's private signal was on the envelope."

Then Hedden could say:

"I just stuffed everything into my pocket and maybe that one got left when I took the others out."

But Silver Sands left him in quiet possession of her letter and the next morning, immediately after he had brushed his teeth, Mr. Hedden ripped it open, and read as follows:

XIII

MY LITTLE SILVER:

Just as you dropped from the skies into my undeserving life, and showed me the way to happiness, so now the good Van Brunt, out of a heart many sizes too large for the average man (and because he did see my Silver through a porthole and thought the world of her), has shown me a broad exhilarating road at the end of which I may hope to find fortune. A fortune is a pleasant thing, Silver Sands. Even before I knew you I wanted to be rich. 'Cause why?

"Make me to need no aid from men
That I may help such men as need."

But now the crying need of money has doubled, trebled, millionupled, all because of a slip of a girl, all tanned by the sun, and dear, with the laughingest mouth in the world and the magicalest great eyes.

But how are we ever to say to each other the things that are to be said? And how is that strong youth, Paul Henley, to bear a long absence from his "Dear"?

Listen, Little Brown Love: there lurk among Mexican mountains certain divers and particular mines. The Lost Mines men call them. These belong to rich man Van Brunt, and lo, because there are troublous times in Mexico these mines require a caretaker—a bold, resolute fellow who cannot be bluffed, because he is so much in love, and so well loved back, that he is stronger and perkier than any other twelve men in the world put together.

This then is the plot. In Texas I am to gather a band of cowboys, and with them, to stand guard over the Lost Mines until times and manners in Mexico are more domestic than now. We shall be too strong to be attractive to robbers, insurgents or regulars. So you are to have no anxiety about that. We shall be in a divine and sparkling climate. And so no fear on that score. And I shall think about you all day and dream about you all night—in case *that* was worrying you.

Only this is a trouble. That we shall be apart for ever so long and that it may be impossible to receive or send letters. Honey heart, if you don't get letters from me for outrageous lengths of time, how are you to believe that I am faithful, and that all my love is always all yours? You will believe in me because you love me. My first thought of you was this: Oh, God, how she would love a man and trust him—*if* she loved him. Almost I think I wanted your love before I loved you. But who shall say which of two things happened first in a billionth of a second? At this moment I wish that I could crawl a long, long way and kiss your feet. I don't know why love should suddenly focus upon just such a longing. I only repeat the facts. And I wish that all the time I could be protecting you (most successfully) from terrible dangers that you knew nothing about. I wish I had you in my arms. I wish I had known you well enough to kiss you, that time in the *Gopher* when your face was all wet with salt spray. What a lot of time we wasted.

On the way to the Lost Mines I shall write and telegraph again and again. If after that letters are few and far between, don't lose heart or faith, dear heart, will you? The address I gave you, care of

Van Brunt, will reach me if any address will. This banishment into a far country won't last forever. And I shall own a fourth interest in the Lost Mines, which are richer than the dreams of the average avaricious—and all this being finished and done and attended to and made history—we'll get married the soonest possible. And if I'm not good to you and don't make you happy and give you everything that's worth having in this best of worlds God punish me!

God bless and keep you, my darling!

PAUL.

McKay Hedden merely remarked, "Bean Soup!" and tore the letter into a thousand pieces.

XIV

AND so it came about that Silver Sands did not quite know what had become of her lover. Letters she had and telegrams—such letters as a man very much in love, but swiftly travelling, may find time to write; such telegrams as a man may send to a girl without giving her secret away in her home town. And all that he talked about, openly in letters, covertly in the telegrams, was his love for her and hers for him. Of plans in general and of the Lost Mines in particular he made no further mention, except in this last letter of all.

"I've got together the bulliest crowd of boys, and to-night we cross the river. . . ."

She pondered over that a good deal and could not make it out.

Every day for a week she had one or more letters and one or more telegrams. And then no more of either. At meals and between meals Hedden studied her face. And it became evident to him after a while that she did not know what had become of Henley.

"At least," said Hedden to himself, thinking of the destroyed letter, "the young pup has the sense not to repeat himself."

To make sure of this, however, he waited until Sunday morning when, the entire Sands family and their servant being at church, he made a thorough and successful exploration of Silver's bureau. He found the letters and telegrams numbered by Silver in the order of their reception, untied the crimson hair ribbon with which she had tied them together and read them at his leisure. Certain phrases in the letters met with his artistic approval, and before replacing the packet as he had found it, he copied them into his note-book for future reference.

And then thoroughly satisfied with the play that fate seemed to have made in his favor, he went for a stroll along the gray water-front, always upon his keen hunt for local color.

"At least," he said, "she won't hear from him often. She's not old enough to stand neglect, even if it's only fancied. Very likely the fool will be murdered."

And he felt that he had arranged everything himself and that it could not have been better done.

"Give her time," he said, "and she'll drop at

my feet like a ripe brown pear from a tree. . . . Yes, I think we may say that Mr. Paul Henley has been successfully eliminated. . . . She won't want to eat out her heart in this place. I know women. She'll be all for New York again—after a little while. And if there is such a thing as a forsaken girl turning to her best friend, to her benefactor, why——"

And the thought opened infinite vistas of triumphant possibilities; not the least of which pictured Henley as returning from Mexico, rich and successful, to find that his Silver Sands had been faithless.

And later he met her returning from church between two boys who loved her dearly. One carried her prayer-book and one carried her hymnal. And she was doing her best to be very sweet and kind to them both, although there was beginning to be a look of great trouble in her eyes.

Hedden lifted his hat, and imagined himself a great French aristocrat, who, at the risk of his life, should salute Marie Antoinette on her way to the scaffold. And when she had passed, he looked back at her over his shoulder, and he said to himself:

"At a pinch I'd marry that girl!"

And he pictured himself, not as the father, but as the companion of incomparably gifted sons and daughters. And a rose that leaned over a garden fence caught his eye. A green, slimy slug was feeding upon its heart, and in an instant Hedden had composed a much-needed line for "When My Ship Comes In."

And then he shook the slug out of the rose, and gave it a dramatic exit, between the brick sidewalk and the rubber sole of his shoe.

XV

EVERY day Silver Sands wrote to Henley at the address which he had given her. But when two weeks had passed after the receipt of his last letter to her she stopped writing. She had never understood why such a wonderful person should love her; and the notion that it had been only a passing whim grew slowly but surely in her heart like a cancer.

Her good friends of Hanleytown remember very well this period in their favorite's life. Old persons and young mothers remember a thousand acts of unselfishness and pure kindness. And they remember, too, the look of patiently borne suffering in her great eyes. Boys and girls of her own age remember that her heart was no longer in childish things, sports, close harmony singing or daring emulation. She could look upon the lofty bowsprit of a coastwise schooner without wishing to show how cleanly she could dive from it; she was a great deal in the kitchen with her mother. And little by

little she renewed her former close association with McKay Hedden.

That wise impostor spoke no more to her of love. But allowed her to see that he, too, could suffer in silence.

"Silver," he said one day, "am I right in thinking that the stage has begun to appeal to you again? Because summer is passing, and something ought to be decided."

"Nothing appeals to me very much just now," she answered.

"You poor child," said Hedden, and he allowed himself to look as if he believed that in this world are certain men who ought to be exterminated. Later that same day he said:

"Couldn't you tell me the trouble? I'd give my hand to help you."

She hesitated, but only for an instant.

"He hasn't written to me for nearly three weeks," she said.

"Not written to you! Why, that is incredible."

"Either he finds that he made a mistake, or something has happened to him."

"What could happen to him, and you not hear of it? He's very well known in New York. An accident to him would have been in the papers."

"I'm not sure that he is in New York. His

last letter was from Texas and he was just going to cross over into Mexico."

"But he's had plenty of time to do that and get back to his place of business. There's no staying long in Mexico now, you know. The whole country is in a state of revolution."

"If he found he'd made a mistake he would tell me."

Hedden averted his face.

"Of course he would," Silver persisted.

Hedden made no comment.

"Why don't you think he would?" she asked.

"Silver," he said gravely, "anything that I might say to you about Henley for good or for evil could not be expected to bear inspection. If I were to tell you that he is a fine man, it could only be attributed to my wish not to appear jealous. If I were to tell you that he was base"—Hedden's voice strengthened on the term—"it could only be construed as the wail of a worsted rival."

"But I know better—you would say what you really thought—to me. You think he would tire of a girl and not tell her? Just let her find out for herself?"

"You'll not trap me into any criticism of Henley," said Hedden. "I shall neither tell you what

I know about him personally, nor what is common gossip. Don't you see that I can't? If I said things about him that you didn't like, even if you had to believe them—you would hate me, wouldn't you? If you want my advice, such as it is, it's yours for the asking. But you've got to let me steer clear of personalities."

"What would you advise?"

"Well, Silver, you've written and he doesn't answer. How long do you think a girl ought to keep up that sort of thing?"

"I've already stopped."

"You can't very well go to New York and hunt him up. Either there is an excuse for his silence or there isn't. In either case you can do no more than you have done. Meanwhile, if you just brood and mope and give your sorrow free rein you'll break your heart. I know you well enough to be sure of that. Life, Silver, is a savage bull; you mustn't run from him or wait for him, you must go to him and take him by the horns and worst him. Silver, upon my soul, believe me—the play's the thing. . . . Make that your interest. At least let me speak to your father and mother——"

"They'll never let me go on the stage."

"You promised that if I could obtain their per-

mission, you would sign a contract with me. Was that promise just words? But forgive me. Of course it wasn't. I would back your word against Rockefeller's bond."

"I did promise," said Silver, "but I'm afraid I couldn't be much use to you if I wasn't happy."

"Let me be the judge of that. Does the promise stand?"

"If you want it to."

"Silver, I only want what is best for you. And I am convinced that the play is the thing. It will lift you right up out of your trouble. But I wouldn't force you into anything. And so I give you your promise back. And now what are you going to do?"

It seemed to her that he was being fine and generous.

"Then I suppose you'd better speak to my father."

"Not yet, Silver. I won't have you saying that I took advantage of you. Think the matter over for a week. Meanwhile I shall vanish. I've worked and worried myself to a frazzle. I need rest and exercise. That's a paradox. I'm going for a little cruise."

"Where?"

"I wish you could come. It would be proper

enough, but the world wouldn't think so. Why, I am going nowhere in particular. I thought I'd just stand out to sea for two or three days and come back."

"But it's blowing half a gale and the papers say that we are in for the worst blow there's been in years."

"Well, I can't help that, can I?" said Hedden cheerfully. Very cheerfully, indeed, for he saw that she was by way of being anxious about him.

"A man," he continued, "has got to take some chances in this world. And, Silver, when I'm sick—sick at heart, there's always been one sovereign cure for me—wind and waves and the open sea. Did you ever have your fortune told? Three gypsies in different parts of the world—one in Scotland, one in Michigan, one in Bavaria—have told me that I shall die by drowning."

"I know nothing about gypsies," exclaimed Silver, "but I know something about boats and sailing. Any man who deliberately puts out in the face of such weather as this—is crazy."

"Silver," said Hedden simply. "Nothing happens to men who have nothing to live for here."

"But you have—hundreds of things."

"Nothing that I care about—any more."

"I think you are very cruel."

He smiled imperturbably.

"I need a tonic," he said, "to my physical make-up there is nothing so bracing as a dash of danger. This won't be the first time I've put out in a gale. And it won't be the last. So look for me a week from to-day, and have your mind made up."

"If anything happens to you it will be my fault. I shall never forgive myself."

"Is it your fault that you are the most beautiful girl in the world, and that I love you as perhaps no man ever loved before? Is it your fault that instead of poor me, you love some one else? That is nonsense, my dear. Fate is to blame. So let fate do the weeping if anything happens to Adonis."

An hour later he gave a sealed envelope into her hands. Upon it he had written: "If anything happens to me, read this, and—destroy it."

XVI

AROUND the corner from Hanleytown, as you may say, is a dent in the coast where a yacht may lie as in a mill-pond through the worst northeaster that ever blew. Furthermore, the bluffs sheltering this little refuge are so high that even the spars of a very tall vessel therein anchored cannot be seen from Hanleytown. The cove and the gray-shingled cottage on the bluff belong to a fat Mrs. Giddings with dyed hair. She calls it her "Summerrr Home." She is connected with the stage. And she is not received socially in Hanleytown.

While Silver Sands imagined Hedden to be somewhere on the tumbling Atlantic, desperately adventuring for love of her, he was being comfortably and even lavishly entertained by his old friend, Mrs. Giddings, and the good ship *Buskin* lay safely at anchor in the cove.

He ran little risk of detection by Silver. During the storm no boats would put out from Hanleytown and accidentally discover his hiding-place, and that Mrs. Giddings should do no talking

could be safely left to a man so high in the profession with which she was connected.

Mrs. Giddings understood selfish men very thoroughly and knew how to make them comfortable. She and her servants waited upon Hedden as if he had been a king, and he conducted himself quite as if her Summerrr Home had been his own.

And Silver Sands worried herself sick about him; and what is more, her father's house seemed dull and empty now that he had gone, and she missed her talks and walks with him. The desperate state of mind in which she believed him was surely no fault of hers; but if anything should happen to him she felt that she could never forgive herself or enjoy a moment's peace thereafter.

He had left her the manuscript of "When My Ship Comes In" and she made a practise of carrying this to the boat-house and rehearsing the different parts in front of an inadequate mirror; for Hedden himself had told her that this was one of the highroads to technic. The wind howled about the little boat-house and the rain roared against it. Within the lonely girl played many parts, fighting all the while against the sorrows that gnawed her heart. She was like one imprisoned in a great drum; sometimes she could

not hear herself speak; and sometimes in lulls of the storm a whisper had the effect in her ears of shouting. At times she suffered terrible discouragement, and did not know what to do with her hands or feet; at other times she actually seemed to herself to be the various people whom she was attempting to portray. Sometimes in going over one of the many love scenes she imagined now that she was Paul Henley and now herself, and this always ended in a breakdown; when she would lie upon the floor, her face buried among tarry canvas boat cushions, and sob till she was dazed and exhausted.

At times the poor child took a certain desperate pleasure in the thought that she had been deserted. It would be painfully pleasant, having loved, never to love again and to be in the eyes of others always an enigma and a mystery. And she knew that such thoughts were childish, and yet she could not help having them—possibly because she was a child.

The storm over, Hedden bade adieu to his hostess, since risk of discovery was now great, and sailed away to Nantucket. Thence he departed in time to reach Hanleytown harbor upon the afternoon of the seventh day. And Silver, through her father's telescope, saw the *Buskin*,

with all her sails set, swing around Cape Hope, and experienced a sensation of relief that was akin to joy. And color, so often absent from her cheeks nowadays, flooded them and her heart quickened.

In that moment she felt a romantic friendship for Hedden. How kind he had been, how patient. And how much the poor fellow suffered on her account. It was her duty, it should be her pleasure, to give him in return all that she could. And since she could not give him love she would give him steady friendship, and faith, and if he should persuade her parents to let her go on the stage, she would leave undone nothing of labor or effort to justify his belief in her.

And she accorded Hedden so warm and affectionate and thankful a welcome that for a few hours he actually believed that her infatuation for Henley had cooled. And it was more intuition than good judgment that prevented him from taking her in his arms and kissing her.

Almost in the first minute of greeting he asked for and received the sealed envelope which he had left in her care. Later he carried it to his room and carefully unfolded and spread the contents on his work-table. He was running short of paper of a certain size and quality, and it was

quite likely that the blank sheets which he had placed in the envelope would come in handy.

Just before supper he said:

"Have you heard from him?"

She shook her head.

Hedden made no comment. He contented himself with looking the anger and contempt which—he didn't feel.

At supper he said suddenly:

"Rose, I've been and written a play under your hospitable roof. I'd like to read it to you and the captain and Silver. I'd like to see how it's going to strike people. And I've another reason—to be disclosed later."

"Why, Mac," exclaimed Mrs. Sands, "you couldn't suggest anything we'd like better."

"After supper, then," said Hedden, and he stole a covert glance at Silver.

And she trembled a little, for she knew how deeply his other reason, "to be disclosed later," concerned her own future.

All mixed in with McKay Hedden's poses, conceits, and affectations were a number of genuine talents. No man living could make more out of a play in manuscript than he could. If his delivery was stagy, at least he differentiated the characters with swift, precise, and telling strokes.

Nor was he content to sit tamely under a lamp; he would give you the setting with delightful clarity, move tables and chairs to represent whatever properties the scene demanded, and at once fall upon the exposition of character and plot with a kind of frenzied energy that kept you on the *qui vive*. I, myself, had the pleasure of hearing him read "Marooned," months before it saw the footlights. And greatly as McIntyre subsequently played it, Hedden's interpretation was swifter and more thrilling. Most certainly, the creature could act. And most certainly if a piece contained slow and dull passages, he knew how to quicken and lighten these by a kind of miraculous slurring and interpolation.

For an hour and a half he took Rose and her husband completely out of their dull little parlor, and set them down among the animating lights and smells of a playhouse. And as for Silver, who knew the piece by heart, his rendering of the whole was a revelation and an inspiration. For an hour and a half she watched and listened, almost breathless, almost motionless, her real trouble forgotten. And then when the last swift, inexorable curtain was down, and Hedden had thrown the manuscript on the nearest table with a kind of disdain, she found that her heart was

thumping wildly against her ribs, and that her face was wet with tears.

McKay Hedden shrugged his shoulders. "I'm out of practise," he said. "I read it very badly. . . . Well, what do you good people think? Is there anything to it—or not?"

Mrs. Sands, what with snufflings and handkerchief moppings, could not speak. Captain Sands, in a husky voice, said: "It's great, Mac, it's great."

Hedden turned to Silver and spoke with a pair of eloquent eyebrows. She picked herself up heavily and left the room.

"Stop crying, Rose," said Hedden, "it's only a play. And I want to talk to you. What do you think of the girl? Did she remind you of Silver?"

"That's why I'm so upset," complained Mrs. Sands.

"I drew her from Silver," said Hedden, "and she's the best thing I've ever done. Far and away—far and away. Captain, that little bundle of hand-written sheets represents my best chance of success in this world. Hitherto I've adapted, faked, and subordinated the humanities to the arts of stage-craft. But though I say it that shouldn't, 'When My Ship Comes In' is a living

drama. It shall have all the resources of my Broadway house to draw from. But it would make good in a barn. And when I think that it will never be produced, at least while I live——"

"For Gawd's sake, why not, Mac?"

"Because there is only one actor in this world whom I would consent to see play the girl. And she is previously engaged."

"Who is she, Mac?"

"She's been engaged by a couple of narrow-minded, selfish managers to play humdrum, stay-at-home village-life parts. They've got her on an interminable contract. And I can't get her away from them by fair means. It's a wicked shame, too. She's never seen Broadway; but she would only have to appear to be hailed as its brightest luminary. And I rather think I know what I'm talking about. You asked me who she is, Carlo. Guess."

And he smiled from one to the other.

"You give it up? Why, she's your own daughter, man."

"Not Silver!" exclaimed Mrs. Sands. "Oh, Mac, you haven't been putting ideas in her head."

"The ideas were already there, Rose. The child wants to go on the stage. She's brimful

of talent, intuition, humor, and fire. Her person and her voice are beautiful . . ."

Mrs. Sands's face became set, sullen, and stubborn.

"We've had our share of the show business in this family."

"Oh, but things are so different nowadays, Rose. And, besides, a travelling circus was never quite the same as a Broadway company."

Mrs. Sands shook her head violently. "Never. Not while there's a breath in this body. Never."

"And you, captain?"

"You know what me and my Mrs. went through, Mac. Do you think we'd expose Silver to—to a man like that man?"

"At least," said Hedden, "his sin found him out before it was too late. At least, Carlo, you had the satisfaction of——"

"I'm glad I killed him," said the captain stoutly.

"And so," said Hedden, "am I. If you hadn't killed him I don't know how I should persuade you to let me introduce Silver to Broadway. . . . Don't lose your wool. I told you I couldn't get her by fair means."

"Are you standing there saying that if we don't let Silver go on the stage you'll give me up?"

"Not to let Silver go on the stage, Carlo, is

worse than a mere commonplace murder. It's killing aspiration, putting beauty in prison, hiding light under a bushel. Come, man, say no more; let her sign a five-year contract with me. I have the same feeling for her that a brother has for a sister."

"And if we don't, you'll tell the police where I live and who I am?"

McKay Hedden stepped to the parlor door, opened it, and called cheerfully to Silver. And when she came he took her by the hand and led her into the room.

"My dear child," he said, "your father and mother have decided that they will not oppose your wish—or stand in your way."

Silver ran and knelt at her mother's feet, and looked in her mother's face.

"Mum, darling," she cried, "please don't look as if it was breaking your heart."

Captain Sands stumped to the nearest window and stood looking out.

"To-morrow, Silver," said Hedden gently, "these dear people will begin to take an active interest in your new career. Just now they think of nothing but the fact that the baby bird's wings have sprouted and that she is going to leave the nest."

"Mother— Father," said Silver. "Don't be like this; say something."

Her father came and, gathering her in his arms, lifted her to his heart.

"Oh, my dear—my dears," cried Silver. "I'll try to make you so proud of me, and I'll make you so happy and comfy and all, and all—'when my ship comes in,' my dears, 'when my ship comes in'!"

"It's for your good, Silver," said Hedden, "and for theirs!"

XVII

SILVER SANDS had persuaded her parents that it was "easier to say good-by here" (they had intended to accompany her to New York), and in the end it was decided that she should start upon her adventure alone, timing her departure according to advices from McKay Hedden, who had gone cruising again in the *Buskin*.

She had very few preparations to make.

"You'll need a brand-new kit," Hedden had said, "and Nell Michelin will put you wise to the dressmakers and the fashions. She'll meet you in the Grand Central and from the first you'll be right under her wing."

Silver would have been very happy at this time if she had not been in a kind of apathetic despair about Henley. Without a word of explanation he had stepped out of her life into the unknown. If she had received the letter which Hedden had destroyed nothing could have shaken her faith in her lover. But she had not received that letter nor any other telling her that he might

have to be silent for a long time and that she must never let her power of belief in him grow tired.

It was pleasant to find what a big place she occupied in the hearts of Hanleytown. The first shock that a Hanleytown beauty was going on the stage had been got over without casualties, though many of the older women who remembered the stern, stoic, patient, and deeply religious whaling days had declared that it would be the death of them. But in the end even Mrs. Pratt announced that, if anybody could be an actress and remain undamned, that body was Silver Sands.

Until the bolt actually fell, the community had not realized perhaps how far it had lapsed away from its golden era. There was nothing now to hold the young men in Hanleytown. The sea was no longer a stern and joyous road to fortune; it was rather a large body of water for aliens of means to swim in or sail upon. So the young men who in the old days might have been well-to-do sea-captains at twenty drifted away to Boston or New Bedford or West, and became clerks in banks, or cowboys, or prospectors, and those who remained, a less worthy lot, gave much thought to dress and pleasure and the constant beguilement from parents of small sums in cash.

The walls of many a Hanleytown parlor boasted framed pictures, cut from periodicals, of stage beauties. Persons who had never seen the inside of a theatre or missed a church service were the exceptions now rather than the rule. The touch of baby hands turned those who had been hard and pleasure-hating parents into soft and merry grandparents. The old town hall, where once a genuine witch had been condemned to death by burning, was now a temple dedicated to humorous and tragic stories as revealed by the cinematograph. The movies had come to stay, the automobile and the telephone; nine catboats out of ten could run eight miles an hour in a dead calm, and make a smell like burnt gasolene and a noise like an evil conscience. And for every man of Anglo-Saxon descent you saw upon the street, you saw two nigger-black Portuguese. In short, Hanleytown was now an easier and a pleasanter place to live in, and its gods had departed and its glory.

But whatever Hanleytown now did that it didn't use to do, it had yet to furnish Broadway with a star. It was this that had rendered Silver's position almost untenable for a day or two.

Then Mrs. Pratt went to see Mrs. Moore, and she said:

"If I was young and pretty and smart, I believe I'd go on the stage myself. I don't condemn Mrs. Sands for letting Silver follow her bent. I admire her, and you can say I said so. Last year when they had the theatricals I said to Mrs. Pease, that Silver Sands ought to be a professional and earn good money by her arts of mimicry. You can ask Mrs. Pease if I didn't. And now that it's come to pass just like I said it would, I think we ought to get together and wish the child well. For my part, I'm going to talk plain to her. I'm a-going to point out the dangers and pitfalls and I'm going to tell her not to pay any attention to 'em, but just to mind her own business, and fear the Lord. . . . Talk about fearin' the Lord, old man Handy says he's so afraid of the Lord that when he dies he's goin' to have a loaded shotgun buried with him. Now you just pass along what I've said about Silver. If I've got any say in this town it's on her side, and you can say I said so. What's more, when she has her first appearance I'm going to be in that theatre, wherever it is, so she won't feel she hasn't any friends cheering her on."

Now, Mrs. Pratt was and is a great power in Hanleytown. She lives in its only brick house and she has survived three husbands, all of

them whaling captains, and all of them prosperous.

And her approval of Silver's venture lent it a kind of defiant respectability.

There were certain boys who felt at Silver's departure that now indeed the glory of Hanleytown was gone forever.

She went away into the tag end of a northeaster, swift-moving, white-capped waves, and shimmerings of pale sunshine.

She travelled to New York via New Bedford and Providence. And, unbelievable though it may seem in this year of grace, rode in a railroad train for the first time, for the first time ate a meal alone, for the first time bought and read a novel which had not been perused previously by her father or mother.

She rode in the parlor-car, and was so homesick that if at least one man (now one and now another) had not been looking at her out of the corner of his eyes from start to finish, she must have wept bitterly.

A colored porter snatched her brand-new suitcase out of her hands, and she followed him along an interminable concrete walk which terminated in an iron gateway and a gauntlet of people come to meet friends or relatives.

A little apart from the crowd stood a lady of statuesque form, of a smiling, kindly, commanding aspect. She had a face of classic beauty, not clever, and the most beautiful hat and dress that Silver had ever seen. The lady was accustomed to being stared at, and enjoyed it. She was neither bold nor shrinking, but a woman who valued her own beauty, took pleasure in it, and was glad that it should give pleasure to others.

Silver recognized her at once from photographs which Hedden had shown her, and a little thrill of excitement swept through the tired and lonely girl.

"Mrs. Michelin? I'm Silver Sands."

"My word!" exclaimed Mrs. Michelin. "You *are* a duck. McKay told the truth for once."

Silver smelled cosmetics and rice-powder: she had been affectionately kissed on both cheeks.

"Taxi? Where you goin'?" It was the porter who had spoken. Mrs. Michelin answered. She knew her way about.

"Follow us," she said sweetly, "and you'll find out where we are going."

She seemed to sweep Silver through the station, as a wave sweeps a cork, and into an electric brougham, very black and smart, in waiting at the Vanderbilt Avenue entrance.

There was a bunch of roses in the brougham in a silver-and-crystal vase, a mirror, a powder-puff, etc. Mrs. Michelin, lifting her veil and talking pleasantly, began to occupy herself with these.

"You don't mind dining early? I'm playing, you know. My Gawd, but I'm tired of it! Afterward McKay is taking us to supper at the Knickerbocker."

"I haven't a thing to wear," said Silver.

"Well, you'll have to have something. New York isn't the Garden of Eden yet—worse luck. But we've thought of that. Mrs. O'Mally will be at my apartment, and, drunk or sober, she'll create something for you while we wait. It will only be thrown on and pinned on, but it will look like a three-hundred-dollar Paquin, and with your face—! I hope you're not scrawny. You don't look scrawny. But in my experience extreme youth and collar-bones are synonymous terms. McKay tells me that you and he are great friends, and he says that you have a wonderful talent. I do hope he won't have such a time worming yours out of you as he had worming mine out of me. I ought to have arrived years ago. However . . . you're to stop with me until you know your way about a little. I hope you don't mind. This is my glass-house!"

The brougham had stopped before an apartment-house of dignified, upright lines.

Mrs. Michelin lived on the top floor. Her drawing-room windows commanded a view of an East River bridge, and a group of four tremendous chimneys. It was a large and, to Silver's eyes, a beautiful, if not a very orderly place. There were many signed photographs of celebrities, many very deep and easy chairs, others very stiff and gilded. There was a grand piano of Circassian walnut, a table setting forth with prominence whiskey and soda, tall glasses, and ice. There was sheet music on the piano and on the floor. There were several gigantic brass candlesticks out of churches. There was a mezzotint of Mrs. Siddons as the tragic muse; in front of this stood, altarwise, a little satinwood table with candles and flowers on it. There were a number of plays in manuscript tossed carelessly here and there.

It was soon obvious that the famous Mrs. Michelin was not a restful person. Within five minutes she had kissed Silver five distinct, separate times, played three-quarters of a Chopin Polonaise, hummed half a song, drunk a short whiskey and soda, taken off her hat, ordered dinner to be served at seven o'clock sharp, flung

herself four times at full length on a lounge, written two notes and telephoned a telegram.

Silver was then shown to the blue-and-silver bedroom which she was to occupy and was hustled out of her clothes and into a bath. Mrs. Michelin came and went.

Silver dined in a gorgeous Chinese brocade, her hair down her back. During dinner Mrs. Michelin received and answered notes and telegrams and telephone calls. Much of this, Silver soon gathered, had to do with the payment, or rather non-payment, of bills.

"I'm so extravagant," Mrs. Michelin complained, "and I think they cheat me at the bank. Yesterday I just knew I had a couple of thousand to draw against and I got a note saying I was three hundred overdrawn. That comes of not having a man to look after one. When my husband was alive this sort of thing never happened, I can promise you. But I'm sure if people owed *me* money I'd never make *their* lives miserable. You're the lucky one. I'm to help you shop, but McKay says you can go about as far as you like. He believes in you, my dear. Do you realize how wonderful it is to come to Broadway from a little country town and to start at the top?"

"I'm terribly frightened," said Silver.

"That's the one thing we can't allow. With your face and voice there should be no such word as fear or fail."

The apartment bell rang.

"That should be Mrs. O'Mally. The most wonderful dressmaker! I do hope she is sober. But it doesn't really matter."

Mrs. O'Mally was not sober. She was very tall, very bony, very red-headed, and very drunk. When she had had a good look at Silver, and seen how beautiful she was, she swore frightfully and harped upon the expressions "*swate*," "*machree*," and "*a drame*."

It was time for Mrs. Michelin to hurry to the theatre.

"We'll pick you up after the show," she said. "Meanwhile, I'm leaving you in good hands."

And Silver was alone with the drunken Irishwoman. Whereupon there followed two hours of fascinating and original dressmaking.

To Silver, made to revolve slowly in front of a tall and flattering mirror, the time passed with wonderful swiftness. For she soon saw that she was going to bloom as she had never bloomed before. Mrs. O'Mally reeled, swore, and staggered, but her hands went swiftly and surely

"With your face and voice there should be no such word as fear or fail"

about their business, draping, smoothing, pinning, basting, and evolving out of soft and lovely materials belonging to Mrs. Michelin a sleeveless, neckless evening dress that dazzled by its simplicity and its aplomb.

When it was finished, Mrs. O'Mally sat down, in a kind of heap, and laughed.

Then she wept, then she told Silver the story of her life. And it was not a pretty story. Then she had "just one nip" of whiskey, and then she had another. After that she lectured on the beauties of temperance. Then she wept some more. Then she gathered up her dressmaking paraphernalia and departed, staggering, and making the colored elevator boy's life miserable with witty truths about his habits and personal appearance.

"Goodness," thought Silver, "more things have happened already than in all the rest of my life before. I wonder if it's really necessary to be quite so helter-skelter."

A note arrived by special messenger. It was addressed to her. It was from Mrs. Michelin.

DEAREST SILVER:

I forgot to say that if you can't get rid of Mrs. O'M., pretend to telephone for the police. See you later.

Yours, NELLIE.

"How quickly they get to know you," thought Silver. "And don't they ever stop sending notes and telegrams?"

And then she herself sat down and wrote to her mother, stopping now and then to have a peep at the wonderful new dress in the tall mirror.

It was long past her usual bedtime, but excitement kept her awake.

XVIII

THE next day she visited Hedden in his chapel-like office. Even at supper the night before she had noticed changes in him; such simplicity and naturalness as he managed to acquire with his summer tan had been laid aside. It was true that he had been the life of his own table; but he had also been the life of several other tables. The ordinary conventions, it seemed, were not good enough for him. He wore a scarlet tie with his dinner clothes, and scarlet socks, and he drew notice from even far-off tables by the loudness of his voice, by sudden risings and visits to other tables, and by elaborate swinging gestures. If the music pleased him he became silent and tragic, and sent presents of money to the musicians; but if the band by any chance played dance music (that could be danced to) he affected to be in distress; stopped his ears with his fingers, or bit the corner of his napkin. Upon occasion he would seem to be struck by a sudden thought or inspiration worth remembering; it might come in the midst of an anecdote, or a compliment; he

would send for paper and pencil in order to make a record of it.

Under all this affectation and buffoonery the shrewd fellow was careful to note the effect of Silver Sands upon those who were seeing her for the first time. Would her personality spread at once throughout the whole supper room; or be confined to persons in the immediate vicinity of his table? Would a few people only be saying, "a new beauty has come to town," or would the whole Broadway world be saying it? Of this last he had few doubts; but the proof of the pudding is in the eating; and McKay Hedden soon perceiving that half the room was talking about Silver, chuckled with self-satisfaction. And he adopted toward her an intimate proprietary manner, leaning toward her and speaking in quiet tones. What he said at these times was sufficiently ordinary: "Are you having a good time?" "Is there anything that you'd like that you haven't got?" But if people wished to judge by appearances, he might have been saying almost anything they pleased to imagine.

The supper had been a great success. Silver had memories of many men who, lingering a moment in passing had been introduced to her by Hedden or Mrs. Michelin; and she must have

been inhuman not to have realized that, in the telling American, she had made a hit. . . .

McKay Hedden was seated upon a kind of throne; one foot rested upon a velvet cushion and when Silver entered, a small page in knee-breeches was in the act of offering him several sheets of typewriting upon a silver salver.

Perceiving Silver, the great man carelessly accepted the typewriting, dismissed the page with a "Vanish, child," and descended from the throne. He passed his free hand a number of times across his eyes, as if even the subdued and many-colored light which filtered through the stained-glass windows was too much for them. He seemed about to speak, but was interrupted by the sudden sweet and peaceful tolling of a bell. He waited, with bowed head, until the last reverberation had died away. Then sighed deeply, and, tossing the typewritten sheets carelessly on a table, where there was a rare bronze ink-well, several quill pens, a silver cup, half full of number eight shot, and a silver caster containing fine sand, he remarked in an absent voice: "That is your contract, Silver, please sign at the bottom of the last page." Nothing that Hedden had ever done in her knowledge of him could lead her to think that he would take advantage of her. So she pulled off her glove,

and leaned over the table to sign. As she did so two young men came from behind a tapestry and watched her. When she had finished signing they came forward and without orders witnessed her signature. Silver Sands raised slightly interrogative eyebrows to Hedden. He said simply: "A matter of form."

One of the young men folded up the contract and took it away.

"And now," said Hedden, smiling, "you are a star. I welcome you, O star, to my little quarter of the heavens."

They remained standing and Silver could not help looking about the chapel-office with childish wonder and curiosity.

"Let me see! Let me see!" said Hedden. "There was something—something. I have it! A copy of your lines in 'When My Ship Comes In' has been mailed to you this morning. You will be perfect in them Monday week. We shall then begin rehearsals. In the meanwhile, though I shall see you often, I am up to my ears in work, and Nellie Michelin will look after you. I hope you like pretty things to wear, do you?"

Silver burst into a gay laugh.

"You bet I do," she said.

"Money will be no object to you," said Hed-

den. "Spend what you please; but be guided a little by Nellie; she knows what the best people are wearing. And, by the way, you don't want to stop with her forever; so we must find a maid for you and an apartment. You'll enjoy that. Let me know when you begin to buy furniture. I love furniture. But you will want some ready money and I never carry any. Dear me! Dear me!"

He clapped his hands loudly, exclaiming at the same time, "Tisbury! Tisbury!"

A little man, who may or may not have been a Jew, opened a Madonnaed door and poked his head into the chapel.

"Get me four or five hundred dollars, Tisbury."

"Yes, sir."

A few minutes later, the money in crisp, yellow bills was in Silver's hands.

"A little advance against your salary," Hedden explained. "But this is just pocket-money. Dresses and that sort of thing you should charge—better have the bills sent, well, not to me, that wouldn't look well. Have them sent to the McKay Hedden Theatre Co."

"You're awfully good to me."

"Pure selfishness, my dear child—I am count-

ing upon you for added fame and fortune. Is Nellie waiting? Then don't keep her. Have a good time. And mark you, I want you to wear lovely clothes, I want you to have beautiful things. You are too young for diamonds; and you are not rich enough for pearls—at least, not yet. But I saw a lovely string of tourmalines the other day at Tiffany's, old roses, pale greens, faded mauves. Look at it. I would like to give it to you. But I suppose I mustn't."

She shook her head.

"Well, if you like it, buy it. And now, my dear child——"

As she turned to go Hedden called in a loud voice: "Tell Mr. Vanderbilt I will see him in a few minutes."

Silver was deeply impressed. She wondered if it could be one of *the* Vanderbilts. It was not. It wasn't anybody at all. It was just one of those little stratagems by which McKay Hedden continually gulled the gullible and maintained among them an impregnable prestige.

XIX

THERE is no spectacle more touching than that of a sweet and faithful girl whose lover has tired of her. But during the first few weeks of her life in New York Silver Sands hardly had the time to realize how unhappy and broken-hearted she was. Certain heroines, I know, carry their sad looks all through dinner, theatre, and supper parties. To a certain extent Silver did. But she was too human to carry her tragedy into the great department stores and the fashionable dressmaking establishments. Give a natural, healthy, and pretty girl carte blanche to buy things for the first time in her life, and you will have gone a long way in keeping her and melancholia apart.

To the dressmakers Silver was a precious customer. They are a very human lot. They take pride in making pretty clothes, and especially for pretty people. The prettier a client and the better made, the greater the advertisement. That Silver, as a Broadway star, would be, for a time anyway, in the public eye was an added attrac-

tion. But most they liked her because of her personality.

Nine young people out of ten are ashamed to be natural; or if not positively ashamed, consider that a show of sophistication is more expedient. It is for this reason that so many boys smoke and so many girls look bored. The boy wishes to be thought of the world, worldly; the girl likes to appear as one long surfeited with amusements. But Silver Sands was not one of the nine.

She told the dressmakers that never before had she bought her own dresses; that never before had she had any money to spend. And she told them how happy and excited it all made her. Her pleasure and excitement were contagious; even Nellie Michelin was affected; and the oldest and most cynical dressmakers behaved as if the art of dressmaking had just been discovered, and was the most exhilarating sport in the whole world.

Hedden encouraged her to be extravagant. He was always telling her that she could afford to do this and that. Though just what her salary was to be, and when payable, he did not tell her, and she, believing him to be her true friend, and generous to the point of foolishness, did not like to ask.

She had her purchases charged to the McKay Hedden Theatre Company and kept only the vaguest track of her expenditures.

She began to meet and like a great many people. Her enthusiasm, sweet temper, and inexperience delighted them. And though nobody had ever seen her act, she began to enjoy a great reputation. Fables were circulated concerning her. She was said to have drawn great crowds in Chicago and San Francisco. Hardly anybody believed that she had never had a public appearance. "Even Mac," they argued with some justice, "wouldn't give a star part to an absolutely untried person." Many, especially among the women, gave it out as a fact, perfectly well known to them, that she was far, far older than she looked. Such would say, for instance: "Now, you wouldn't believe she was twenty-eight, would you?" or "She really does look like a girl in her teens, doesn't she?"

It became gossip that she had had an unfortunate love-affair. She had eloped, it was said, with a wealthy cattleman from the southwest, only to discover when it was too late (how they relished that "when it was too late"!) that he was already married. Others said that she had really known this all along, but that until he

beat her she had not cared. Her family, stern and rich New Englanders, had cast her off. McKay Hedden had discovered her exhibiting a troupe of trained dogs in vaudeville. She had, it was said, the most wonderful genius for the management of dumb animals.

There were people, mostly men, who accepted her, age, origin, and all, for exactly what she was. And these were the people, because they were simple and sincere, whom she came to like. Some of them, I am happy to say, were actors, quiet gentlefolk, who lived a life of self-denial and endeavor.

One night at supper she sat next to Van Brunt. When he was introduced she did not catch his name, and to him she was simply a very young and beautiful Miss Sands. He did not recognize her for the girl who had passed under his stateroom window with Paul Henley, and whose good looks had caused him to cut himself while shaving. All this was a pity. For Silver might have listened to reassuring words about her lover and his long silence.

Curiously enough, however, Van Brunt talked to her about the Lost Mines, for even Broadway was interested in Mexico at this time, and told her how a young fellow in his office had gone

down there to hold them against the revolutionists, and how it was impossible to get word from him or to him.

"The worst of it," said Van Brunt, "is that this promising youth has a best girl. Of course, he told her not to count on letters, but still she must be having all kinds of fits. He's a charming person. If I were a girl I'd hate to think I'd lost him."

"Is she nice, too?" Silver asked.

"He thinks so," said Van Brunt. "I never met her. I saw her once, and I thought she was about the prettiest girl I ever saw. I suppose I ought to look her up and tell her to be of good cheer. And I would if Wall Street wasn't in such a beastly mess. I simply can't afford the time. And, besides, though I know where she lives I have quite forgotten her name. So I can't write. No, I'd have to go to her city, and wait in the post-office until she showed up."

"But, after all," said Silver a little wistfully, "you haven't much to tell her. You haven't heard from him either. You don't know if he's alive or dead."

"But that's where you are wrong. I *know* he's alive."

"How?"

"I just know it. Sounds like a woman, doesn't it? But some men have intuition, too."

"But if he's been away so long," said Silver, "maybe he's forgotten the girl."

Van Brunt looked her reproachfully in the eyes.

"*This* from you!" he said.

"Just what do you mean by that?"

"I mean that at your age a girl who is cynical about a love-affair ought to be severely punished."

"Oh, but I'm not cynical a bit," said Silver, and her eyes filled suddenly with tears.

Van Brunt, perceiving them, turned hastily away and said to himself: "You fool, you've been and trod on a love-match gone wrong. Some brute has been unkind to this child."

Aloud he said:

"Have you ever seen the Stock Exchange?" Silver Sands shook her head.

"Good," exclaimed the broker, "it's one of the most amusing sights in New York. I'll give a lunch party at down-town Delmonico's; will you come? And who else shall we ask?"

But Silver could not give an answer then because the man at her left suddenly began to clamor for attention. He was a nut-brown Englishman, with a white sabre cut wiped across one

cheek and the bridge of his nose. He was a celebrated correspondent and soldier of fortune. He laid his calling-card on Silver's plate and cried in a bitterly aggrieved tone:

"That's my *real* name and I'm being terribly neglected."

Van Brunt sighed and turned to the girl on his right. He knew by experience that she would talk about nothing but herself. And he preferred women who either talked about him or allowed him to do so.

"And who," said Silver, smiling and coloring, "gave you this name?"

"I'm sure I don't know," said the Englishman, "because I have it on the best of authority that my sponsors in baptism contented themselves by answering N. or M. I think my father must have given it to me. It was just the kind of thing he would do, he was an awful old bla'guard."

Silver was dreadfully shocked and grieved.

"Is that the way Englishmen talk about their fathers?"

"Younger sons do," said the Englishman. "In England you either ought to be the oldest son or you ought not to exist. But never mind, he's quite dead now. And one of my rules is 'de mortuis nil nisi bonum.'"

"And what does that mean?"

"It means that those who speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth are considered hard and wicked. But that's natural. The average person is a born tombstone."

"A tombstone?"

"Simply another word for a cheerful liar. You must have read inscriptions on tombstones, haven't you?"

"Why, yes."

"Well, all the people who used to be alive couldn't have been beautiful and religious and charitable and righteous and beloved. We had a man over in the Foreign Legion who stole a pie from a Turkish farmer's wife and ate it all himself. The next day he was killed by a Greek bullet, and those who ought to have shared in the pie wrote to his mother and said how noble and unselfish he had been—always. Tombstones, I call them."

"And do you always speak the truth?"

"Always."

"Is it ever complimentary?"

"Only when it is about dogs and horses and little children, and young girls with enormous blue eyes."

"Have you ever been to Mexico?"

"I am going—for Van Brunt. I am going to take a letter to the manager of some mines he has down there."

Somehow she longed to ask the manager's name but was prevented by a sudden trepidation of shyness.

"Any messages for any one down there?"

To his horror her eyes filled with tears, and forthwith he dropped his brutal ways, and began to talk so prettily and tenderly and understandingly of all sorts of things in their world that she found herself liking him immensely, and hoping that she wasn't seeing him for the last time.

XX

OF all man's inventions the stage perhaps has the greatest powers of illusion and of disillusion. The other side of Lohengrin's beautiful white swan is rough lumber full of knots; the rock against which the villain "sprains his reason" is made of canvas and is softer than many a lodging-house pillow. A hot bath would melt the jewels in the king's crown. But now and then there treads the stage some man or woman at whose least word or gesture the canvas drop becomes the forest of Arden and the true Romance spreads her great wings and rises in thrilling flight.

The night before the first rehearsal of "When My Ship Comes In" Silver Sands did not sleep a wink. She had the worst sort of stage fright. "Why," she thought, "even the man who walks across with the lantern in the dark scene has had more experience than I. They'll all hate me for being awkward and stupid and they'll all hate me for being taken up and shoved over their heads."

Mrs. Michelin, with whom Silver was still staying, tried to comfort her. "My dear," she

said, "by the time the rehearsals mean anything you will be so used to them you won't care. There's only one way in which you will seem green. You will know all your lines by heart and the others won't. Mac is giving you splendid support. He's got together for you the most experienced and versatile bunch of actors on Broadway. And they know one thing that you will learn, namely, that hardly a speech as now written will be spoken when the curtain goes up for the opening performance. Mac's been telling everybody that he's written a wonderful drama. Well, he hasn't. He may have a wonderful idea for a drama; and he may have arranged it roughly into more or less logical scenes. But he hasn't written it, he won't begin to write it till it's in rehearsal. You'll see. He'll say, 'Stop a little—stop a little,' and everybody will stop. Then Mac will sit centre with his head in his hands, and suddenly he'll jump to his feet, almost foaming at the mouth, and he'll say, 'I have it. I have it.' And then he'll tell you not to say what you've just said or to do what you've just done, but exactly the opposite, maybe. That's how he writes plays. He just keeps moving people and words here and there until they look and sound good to him."

But Silver's stage fright persisted, and when she reached the theatre controlled by Hedden she thought that her legs were going to give way under her. It was a pale, diffident, wabbly star to whom McKay Hedden was presently introducing her satellites.

Silver has recollections of a very high brick wall, of odds and ends of ropes and canvas flopping and swinging high overhead, of rows and rows and rows of orchestra chairs covered with white cotton sheets, of a number of very ordinary-looking men and women in street dress, of one man who was quite deaf and kept talking a steady stream in order to conceal the fact, of other men in more or less dirty shirt-sleeves who came and went and did nothing when they got there, of a nice, friendly looking old lady who sat in a papier-mâché throne and knitted on a green silk necktie— They had all been introduced to her, and they had all said pleasant, complimentary things. She was having quite a nice talk with the friendly old lady, when suddenly McKay Hedden clapped his hands and cried in a loud voice:

"No! No! No! Now, then, once more— from the beginning."

He seemed to have been exasperated for hours. Nothing changed. The men in shirt-sleeves

continued to come and go and to do nothing when they got there. The old lady continued to knit, the deaf man to talk. One of the ladies in street dress suddenly picked a piece of lint from the right shoulder of the gentleman in street dress, and at that moment McKay Hedden clapped his hands and cried:

"Capital! Capital! That is a touch of real life. If you please!—once more!"

Once more the lady removed lint (an imaginary piece this time) and Silver saw that her lips were moving.

Then the men in shirt-sleeves stopped coming and going, the deaf man stopped talking, the nice old woman stopped knitting, and everybody looked at Silver. It was like—she thought of this afterward—one of those awful scenes in "Alice." There was a painful silence.

"Your cue, Miss Sands," said Hedden.

"Oh, I didn't hear a word," said Silver.

"Very well, then," said Hedden, "once more from the beginning—try to get it right this time, Miss Sands. Now, then—from the beginning!"

Once more the shirt-sleeves came and went, the deaf man talked, and the old woman knitted. Once more the lady picked lint from the gentleman's shoulder and moved her lips, but this time

Silver, having gathered what the various persons were supposed to be doing, stepped forward and in her sweet, clear, friendly voice said:

"I'm so sorry."

Instantly Hedden began to stamp and to thrust his hands one after another through his tall, black hair, something like a dog learning to swim, and at the same time he shouted:

"Tremendous! Tremendous!"

Then he walked apart by himself, appeared to wrestle with an emotion; and came back. Then he bowed very reverently before Silver, and said: "won't you go through with that once more—as a personal favor to me—Madame Duse?"

So once more Silver stepped forward and said that she was *so* sorry, and once more McKay Hedden shouted:

"Tremendous! Tremendous!" . . .

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Michelin, "how did it go?"

"Oh," said Silver, "I have spent a whole afternoon in chaos. It's terribly hard to understand. Why, nobody even speaks audibly except me!"

"Well," said Mrs. Michelin, "it was out of chaos that the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is. So don't worry. If the Lord could do all that, McKay Hedden can

at least make a Broadway success out of the same materials. How do you like your company?"

"I didn't get to know them very well. But they were very polite. I wish Mr. Hedden didn't have to shout and stamp so. I like the nice old woman who knits neckties——"

"Mrs. Ambler."

"Yes, and I liked Miss Reeves."

"Did you?"

"She asked if she could come to see me, and I said yes. Do you mind?"

"Of course I don't. I think she's sweet. But she's had a sour life enough, poor girl!"

. . . . . .

The next day Miss Reeves came to see Silver and take her to rehearsal. To Silver she seemed rather too sophisticated, but sweet and understanding, and not a bit jealous. On the other hand, she had a disturbing quality. She did not trust many people and she managed to make her suspicions contagious.

They passed a pleasant half-hour opening boxes which had come to Silver from various dressmakers and department stores. And suddenly Miss Reeves said:

"For Heaven's sake, don't get carried away

and spend yourself into a hole. Of course I don't know what you earn—and all real lace! My dear, I think they are perfectly exquisite. But there's one thing every girl ought to learn and that is: 'To earn a little and to spend a little less.' "

Silver laughed.

"But Mr. Hedden told me to go as far as I liked! And you see I've never had any pretty things before."

"I've heard women of eighty make that same excuse," said Miss Reeves. "As for me, I've learned only one thing in ten years of New York. A girl mustn't owe money. But of course I've never been a star. I don't even know what a star earns. There are rumors, of course, but one never knows."

"Well, I can't tell you," said Silver, "because I don't know, either."

"You're spending money right and left, and don't know what you are earning?"

Silver couldn't help feeling that Miss Reeves was prying into matters which did not concern her; but it was not in the child to hurt any one. So she tried to defend her position.

"Mr. Hedden told me not to think about money," she said. "But maybe I ought to have a talk with him. Maybe he didn't quite mean it."

"You have a contract?"

"Yes, I signed one, but I didn't read it."

Miss Reeves was silent for a moment. Then she said: "Look here! You need a nurse! Oh, I know you think I'm butting in, but you don't know this game of life as well as I do. Won't you believe that I'm rather crazy about you and sincerely want to be your friend? Won't you believe that?"

Impulsively she took Silver in her arms and kissed her. And there was something so spontaneous and genuine in the action that Silver believed.

"I think," said Miss Reeves, "that you've begun with a mistake. Please don't spend any more till you know what your salary is. Couldn't you promise me that?"

Silver nodded.

"How much have you spent?"

"I don't know exactly. I don't think it's more than fifteen hundred dollars."

"Well, suppose your salary is two hundred and fifty a week? You've spent six weeks of it."

"Eight," corrected Silver. "He gave me five hundred dollars in cash."

"Well, suppose," said Miss Reeves, "that instead of two fifty a week, you are earning only twenty-five?"

"But Mr. Hedden gave me to understand——"

"Well, ask him pointblank. Will you, please? It's business, my dear, in its simplest form."

"Somehow, I don't like to bother him about money."

"People never do until it is too late. And, by the way, how long does your contract last?"

"Why—I don't know that, either."

"Little Miss Sands," said Miss Reeves very gently, "you are a little nanny-goat."

And she sighed with real feeling.

When the rehearsal was over Silver left the theatre with Miss Reeves.

"Did you ask him?"

"Yes. He said I am earning two hundred and fifty, and that our contract is for three years. So you see——"

"Did anybody hear him say so?"

"How suspicious you are."

"Suspicious of McKay Hedden? My dear, he's the biggest liar and cheat on Broadway."

Silver felt as if she had been hit between the eyes.

"I don't believe it!" she said. "I know better than you how white he is."

"Ask him what your salary is before witnesses. Not before his clerks and errand boys, but before

me and, yes, Mrs. Ambler. She can't be bought, either."

"He's been a good friend to me," said Silver. "And I'm going to trust him."

"If you do you'll regret it all your born days."

"I don't want to quarrel—" said Silver.

"You shan't, dear. Because now I know that you need a friend."

"If we're to be friends, you mustn't say horrid things about other friends of mine."

"I won't. I'm sorry I spoke."

And she set her keen wits to work to see how she could save Silver Sands from a situation as odious as it was obvious.

XXI

OUT of these daily riots, optimistically termed rehearsals, McKay Hedden began to give a final and lasting shape to the play which he had stolen from Paul Henley. Gradually the mumbling of the actors became articulate; the heart-bladed harpoon with which the murder was to be done arrived from New Bedford, and was substituted for the shepherd's crook with which the villain had been practising. The scene-painter and stage-carpenter had evolved from laths and canvas, and a zealous emulation of old prints, a realistic forward section of a whale-ship, and were busy at work on the figurehead which comes to life. Already the set representing Hanleytown's street of Many Eyes, the charming old houses (*en echelon*, the better to see the homing whaler round Cape Hope), had been built and painted; and the scene before the little Christopher Wren church was nearly finished; and the truly beautiful nightscape, Hanleytown harbor and its light, and farther off the light of Cape Hope, three white flashes and then a red flash, and between them, rising, a jagged silver moon; just

as the lovers see it from the top of Execution Hill.

As for Silver, she was beginning to submerge her own personality in that of Hope Merrymouth. To Hedden, who had banked more upon her beauty and her voice and her youth than upon any other of her attributes, she was beginning to be a revelation. "I knew she was a pearl-oyster," he said, "but I didn't know she actually contained a pearl of great price. She isn't going to be a personality hit; she's going to be an artistic hit. She's got something here—something here," and he beat his forehead, "that other people haven't got. She's something that I didn't believe existed. She's the genius that achieves success at the first effort. I tell you that child is inspired, touched with divine fire."

It was to his lawyer, a man impossible to deceive, to whom he thus spoke. But he asked other people to believe that Silver's acting was the result of the infinite pains which he himself had taken with her. He wanted the world to think that he had taught her shade by shade, note by note, and step by step.

As a matter of fact, her intuition was continually setting him right. But he would never allow this to appear. He would tell her to read

a certain line in a certain way, and she, carried away by a sudden flame of inspiration, would give it an altogether different reading, and one which Hedden was clever enough to see was to his own as gold was to gilt. But he would only say:

"Just so. Thank you. At last you get me!"

But of course he helped her in a hundred ways and showed her a hundred short cuts; for beneath the most inspired acting is a technic which has to be learned slowly like scales on the piano. He could not make a finished actor of her in six weeks, but he could give her so excellent an imitation of finish that only trained actors and critics would be able to perceive her naïveties and shortcomings. As for the "groundlings," she would sweep them off their feet. Better than this, clergymen would advertise "When My Ship Comes In," from pulpits; girls' schools would be brought to see it. And money would descend upon him in showers.

She was going to prove so valuable that sometimes he actually considered the advisability of giving her a square deal. To his artistic and dramatic instinct it seemed almost a tragedy that she should be so cheated of her just deserts, and of life itself, as he intended to cheat her.

Such thoughts sometimes kept him awake at night. And once, following out logically the results to her of his plans and plots concerning her, he actually shed tears.

One day he sent for her. She found him standing in a shaft of many-colored lights that streamed through the rose window of his chapel-office. She found him standing; but he conveyed the effect of one who has just risen from prayer.

"Silver," he said, "I have been thinking about you. I want your life to be different from that of other actors. I want it to be peaceful, serene, untrammelled. If I thought that by any chance the stage could cast a shadow on so white a soul as yours, I would send you back to your people. . . . Silver, darling Silver—couldn't you let me stand between you and the unkind world? Together we should become immortal!"

When a man wants to make love to a girl he shouldn't send for her. He should know that colored lights and romantic surroundings are not nearly so important as sincerity and impetuosity. If you want to tell a girl that you love her, break down the front door, throw her big brother out of the window, and get arrested, if necessary. But don't be stagy.

Even gentle Silver, who wouldn't have hurt a

fly's feelings, resented the situation in which Hedden had placed her. As her employer, he had a right to send for her. And that rendered his doing so even more odious. For the first time her heart questioned his sincerity and honesty.

"Marry me, Silver—for God's sake, marry me!"

And he flung himself on his knees at her feet, and looked up into her face with a wild and tragic expression.

She was a little angry, a little frightened, and a little inclined to laugh.

"Please—please don't, Mr. Hedden," she said. "You oughtn't to—it isn't fair to send for me and——"

Hedden rose to his feet, and his face darkened.

"You still love that man!" he cried. "Damn him! He has spoiled your life—and mine."

"You promised to be my friend."

"I am only a human being—only a human being!" he cried and thrust his hands through his hair, and mumbled something about his "throat" and "ending it all."

He went and leaned against one of the fluted pillars which supported the chapel's vaulted roof.

"I am nothing to her, nothing," he murmured, and hid his eyes on his forearm.

"I am so sorry."

Hedden appeared to pull himself together. He shook himself, straightened his cravat, and smoothed his hair. He walked to his great work-table and took from a drawer a sheaf of bills.

"Wish you'd look them over," he said, "and O. K. them, if they are all right. This is why I sent for you. But, seeing you, I said what I said. I am sorry. Try to think kindly of me, Silver. For all the savor has gone out of my life. I used to love my work. But now in all my heart there is room but for the one thing. Sometimes I wish that I had never seen you."

"I'm so sorry," said Silver, and she took the sheaf of bills and escaped as quickly and kindly as she could.

XXII

WITH rehearsals in full blast, Silver began to experience the immense stress under which actors sometimes live. Rehearsals themselves took up five to twelve hours of the day. She had rented an apartment of her own, in the same building with Nellie Michelin, and was doing it over from top to bottom—or rather from end to end. She was getting her costumes for "When My Ship Comes In." Van Brunt had presented her with a West Highland terrier puppy from his celebrated kennels and she was trying to teach the said puppy how gentlemanly little dogs are supposed to behave themselves in brand-new drawing-rooms. She was doing her dutiful best to tell her father and mother and her friends in Hanleytown all the wonderful things that were happening to her. She was taking piano lessons (she had always played fluently, but by ear). She was taking singing lessons; and every day she discovered that the world contained more and more people whom it was necessary to remember by name and face and to be polite to. Gradually

she had come to know a few of the younger people in the Meadowbrook colony, and these had gone quite mad about her; and it seemed to her that the whole world held her in affectionate and chivalrous regard. There were always motors to take her wherever she wanted to go, always flowers for her to wear, always more delightful invitations than she could possibly accept. And no day passed but she felt herself being pointed out and named by people who were utter strangers to her. She began to figure (most amiably) in the newspapers; a magazine published a series of six photographs of her. Editors clamored for her opinion on the stage as a profession, on woman's rights, on the morality of the tango. She could have received money for airing her opinion on the Mexican situation, for thousands of people were eager to know what so young, untaught, and beautiful a creature thought about anything.

But Silver was really too busy to think. Her idle hours were spent in refreshing sleep—or mostly. When the day with its rehearsing and purchasing and telephoning and telegraphing and its dressmaking and note-writing and West-Highland-terrier-puppy training and its lively dinner-party and its livelier supper-party was

over, and she lay down to rest, there was always a space of five or ten minutes when she felt utterly bewildered and forsaken and frightened, and thought about Paul Henley and sometimes cried a little. And waking it was the same. And there were times during the day when she would have a sudden sinking feeling as of everything being hopelessly complicated and wrong. But it wouldn't be fair to say that she was unhappy; for sometimes her faith in Henley would flare up strong and bright, and then for a while she could fly at all the new excitements of life with the most youthful and delightful enthusiasm.

Hedden fortunately was up to his ears in work. Even the devil should have his dues upon any matter tending to his own advantage or reputation. The man could work all around the clock. And he felt so sure of his chances with "When My Ship Comes In" that he was leaving unturned no major or minor stone of detail by which its success might be further insured, if only by a fractional part of one per cent.

Of course Silver saw a great deal of him; but only professionally. He had, it is true, a Napoleonic way of summoning her at wholly unexpected moments to his chapel-office, but it was always upon some business connected with her

part. He might keep her ten minutes; he might keep her two hours. But whatever the interval of time it was devoted to work.

As everybody knows, the last act of "When My Ship Comes In" opens with Silver winding a chain of silk—stretched around a magnificent ivory swift—into a ball, and singing—well, not exactly singing—talking in tune rather—the saddest little sea lullaby. She just smiles the song to the slowly revolving swift, smiles it very naïvely and very sadly, until all the men in the audience, especially those who have taken something during the entr'actes, want to die for her, and all the women (who are old enough to acknowledge how old they are) cry quietly, and the younger women wonder why the deuce their singing teachers didn't teach them to sing like that, instead of to mouth and scream so that nobody could possibly know what the song was about.

Originally the last act opened with a clumsy old-fashioned soliloquy. Now although soliloquies contain some of the world's best literature they are dramatically a mistake. In real life you don't say (to the four walls of a room) "I hear so and so arriving, I will just peek through the keyhole and see what he's up to." You *may* hear him arrive, and you *may* peek through the

keyhole, but you don't talk about it—in real life. And it's a mistake in stage life. Well, Hedden had turned his wits inside out to avoid this damning little soliloquy, and could not; because it was inseparably connected with the logic of the plot.

One day Silver said, "I can't get over feeling like a fool when I talk to myself like that. I never did in my life. People don't. Why couldn't that soliloquy be rhymes instead of prose and why couldn't I sing it?"

Hedden's heart gave a great leap upward. He felt that he personally (not Silver, he gave her no credit) had been suddenly and divinely inspired. So he smiled patronizingly.

"Why, my dear," he said, "I've been working on that song for weeks."

He hadn't, of course, but he went to work at once, or rather he hired others to go to work for him. A celebrated writer of Bab-Balladian verse, a man who could have made a brownstone house rhyme with a porpoise, supplied the words, and a sad little Pole, first fiddle in Hedden's own orchestra, supplied the tune. And he it was who taught Silver to sing it, saying: "Remember, miss, a song is only a song when the words are greater than the music. If the music is more

important than the words—then it is not a song, but merely a music. The words they have made for you to sing are very sweet, very touching. When you sing, think of them only, and speak them with feeling to the little air I have adapted for them. Now then: *one*—two—three—*um* tum tum—you will have no accompaniment, remember that. You must imagine it—it is splashes of rain every here and now upon the windows—so then . . . No! No! not so. You are trying to give the audience *my* music. It should be the *words* you give them. You know Shubert? You know Sylvia? What is lovelier than Shubert's music for that! I shall tell you. It is Shakespeare's words for it. So you should not sing the Shubert of it, but the Shakespeare. Only remember that. Now then! Once more!"

And presently Silver was opening that fourth act as we have all heard her open it, and the Polish fiddler went into an ecstasy, and suddenly to her intense bewilderment flung his arms about her and kissed her first on one cheek and then on the other. And then, aghast at what he had done, and the possible consequences (he had a wife dependent on his salary, and seven little Poles), he cried, "Oh, Miss Silver—do not think for a moment I would dare to kiss you. It was your music

that I kissed. Your music—your understanding —your genius. It was the words I kissed, not the tune. The soul—not the beautiful bright cheeks."

XXIII

IN other and less agreeable ways, Silver Sands was beginning to learn something of the trials and responsibilities which go with success. She knew at this time more society people than actors (I don't know why they should be thus distinguished from each other, for actors on the whole are more sociable than society people), but she knew enough actors to have acquired the certainty that theirs is a profession of uncertain rewards; a way of life in which character plays a very small and unimportant part—not even a speaking part; and in which the only value of a man or woman is that which a fickle and quite unintelligent public places upon them.

And so like all other successful people who are worth their salt she became a money lender. At first with every confidence that the little loans would be paid upon the nail, according to promise; and later with even more confidence that they would never be paid at all.

Hedden kept her well supplied with money. And Miss Reeves contemplated her extravagances

with the deepest misgiving. But having tried to interfere once, and gotten herself temporarily disliked, she now assumed the attitude of a sympathetic, but unconcerned observer.

One day as Silver and Miss Reeves were just going into Delmonico's for a quick bite between two long halves of a rehearsal, a young man with upstanding red hair, and a heavy, but pleasant twinkly face, gave an exclamation of joy (it was almost a shout) at seeing Miss Reeves, and a moment later was giving her hand a sound, hearty shaking and telling her in a voice (carelessly loud and unconcerned) that he was beside himself with delight at seeing her again.

"I've just landed," he said, "and the first person I see reminds me of all the good times I left behind. Thank God my novitiate is over."

"Silver," said Miss Reeves, and her face was soft with real pleasure, "Miss Sands, let me introduce Mr. Waring."

One swift glance at Silver was enough for the bold youth.

"You didn't exist when I went away," he said; "if you had I should have known it."

"Say that if you had known it," said Miss Reeves, "you wouldn't have gone away."

"Well, I wouldn't," beamed Mr. Waring.

"Just the same," said Silver, in her kind, friendly, rather timid way, "unless it was long, long years ago, I actually did exist, and was a very important person—to myself."

"I'm going to order lunch for three," announced Mr. Waring.

"Make it short, Sam," said Miss Reeves, "and light. We have to work all afternoon."

A few moments later they were seated at one of the tables near the long glass partition, and Mr. Waring, his elbows on the table, his heavy features brightened with kindness and pleasure, addressed himself to Miss Reeves, and said:

"Now tell me everything."

But it was impossible that the ladies should enjoy the young man's complete attention, at any rate the outward manifestation thereof. For men passing through the corridor to the bar, perceiving him through the glass screen, stopped long enough to attract his attention, and to make welcoming faces at him, beaming elevations of eyebrows, winks and nods in the direction of the bar, or clasping and shaking their two hands at him. And from other tables there came to him smiles and gestures of welcome; toasts were drunk to him across the room; the manager sought him out, and made him a pleasant

little speech of welcome. The musicians in their little balcony grinned their funny foreign grins at sight of him, and after a swift consultation with their leader, struck suddenly into a waltz (very popular two years before) which caused Waring to jerk his head around in their direction, and wave his hand to them with smiles and nods of friendly greeting and appreciation.

None of this being lost upon Silver, it was only natural that she should be very curious to know who Mr. Waring was and what he was. Could he by any chance be the son of *the* Waring? As a matter of fact he was, but to the genius which the father had for converting all that he touched into gold, the son had added the greater genius of friendships. And before she knew it, he had added Silver's to his great long list.

"Couldn't I come to rehearsal?" he asked.

"If you can get by the doorkeeper," said Miss Reeves, "and if Hedden doesn't throw you out. This is a secret play. Nobody's been allowed to see it."

"So much the better," said Waring. "Nothing like being the first to burst into an unknown sea."

Half an hour later he had made his way past the doorkeeper, and had located McKay Hed-

den. Strict as were the latter's rules about admitting outsiders to rehearsals, they yielded at once to Mr. Samuel Waring's cajoling manners. Hedden only stipulated that the young man should not give any one a hint of what he should see, until after the play had had its first night.

"It's a new sort of play," said Hedden; "new in matter, in manner, and in treatment. It wouldn't do to have the critics get any hold on it yet a while. I want it," he said dreamily, "to burst with all its freshness upon the public—all at once."

The rehearsing began, and as it went on, Mr. Waring's good-natured face became serious and troubled. Once in a while he frowned and seemed to be trying very hard to remember something or other. But nobody noticed him, for once in his life. He sat apart in semidarkness, while the characters of the piece came and went and spoke their lines, and handled their properties, and were constantly interrupted, corrected, and (I must in justice admit) inspired by McKay Hedden.

Rehearsals over, Mr. Waring drove Silver and Miss Reeves to the former's address, and said good-by to them (ascending) through the bronze grill of the elevator. Then he sat down at the

telephone in the hall of the apartment-house and gave the number of Van Brunt's office.

"I want to speak to Mr. Henley . . . Mr. Paul Henley. . . . Then I'll speak with Mr. Van Brunt. . . . Mr. Waring, Mr. Samuel Waring. . . . Halloo *yourself!* . . . It's bully to *be* back. But listen, I want to see Paul. It's important. . . . Mexico. . . . The devil! . . . When'll *you* be up-town? . . . No, not the Tennis Club. I'm just back and there'll be too many men I'll be glad to see. Make it Carson's and we'll go on to the club later."

XXIV

AFTER a second very genuine greeting Van Brunt and Waring seated themselves at a retired table in the back of Carson's place and ordered something to drink.

"First place," said Waring, "I swear you to secrecy. I'm going to start by betraying a confidence myself. And it mustn't go any further. I've been attending a rehearsal 'round at McKay Hedden's theatre. . . ."

Van Brunt smiled.

"Miss Silver Sands's new play?"

"And Miss Reeves's." But Waring blushed a little in spite of himself.

"Well?"

"Hedden let me stay, only on my positive promise that I wouldn't tell anybody one single thing about the play. And that's where my betraying a confidence comes in. I'm going to tell *you* things about that play."

The drinkables having been brought, Van Brunt interrupted his friend long enough to give and receive a "Here's how." Then Waring went on:

"Just before I went away, going on two years

now, Paul read me a play that he'd written. I thought it was a peach of a play. Later Paul wrote me a kind of discouraged letter saying that Hedden had rejected the play and that he, Paul, had taken Hedden's word for it that it wasn't worth a damn and had chucked it into the fire, and was going to give up all ideas of being a literary light and stick to broking."

"Umm," nodded Van Brunt.

"Well, this play—this play that I've been to see—this wonderful new play of Hedden's, is Paul's play—out and out. When it comes to remembering, I can go some. Else how'd I have graduated from Harvard?"

"Of course," commented Van Brunt, "everybody knows that Hedden is a plain, ordinary, common or garden—" and he made use of one of those telling but unprintable colloquialisms which make language so much more amusing to speak than to write.

"Of course," Waring agreed. "Well, except for a general change of scene and period he's stolen Paul's play—body, blood, and soul."

"Paul ought to know."

"He's *going* to know."

"It's impossible to communicate with him now—without using troops."

"Impossible? And this from you? You tell me exactly where he is. Show me on the map, and I'll communicate with him in mighty short order."

"Even your father—" began Van Brunt.

"It isn't a question of bringing pressure to bear on a trained seal. The democrats are too busy helping themselves, to help other people. Why, you turn Hans Wagner loose in Mexico with a baseball bat, and he'll go anywhere he likes!"

"You're still some fan, Sam."

"Seriously, though—I've travelled in the southwest, and I know a dozen Indians who'd carry a message to Paul. I'll send half a dozen, each with the same message, so's not to take chances."

Van Brunt shook his head. "Even if Paul knew what was going on, he couldn't do anything about it from way out there."

"Of course not, the message would be from you ordering him home."

"Paul," said Van Brunt, "is looking after a pretty large stake for me—out there."

"He's got a pretty large stake of his own to look after here."

"We might leave it to him."

"As how?"

"Tell him what's going on and tell him to use his own judgment about coming back or staying where he is."

Waring considered this for a moment, and then said abruptly: "Very well, you write to him and have five duplicates made. I'll do the same. . . . I don't mind a man's money being stolen or his wife. But when I hear of a man's invention being stolen—I see red! What was the news with Paul when you last saw him?"

"He was in great need of money."

"That's not news. That need was always chronic with him."

"I offered him a good interest in the Lost Mines if he succeeded in keeping the Mexicans out of them till there's some sort of peace in the country. And he jumped at it. The news with Paul is that just before he went away he got himself engaged."

Mr. Waring beamed with interest.

"To the right sort?"

Van Brunt shrugged his shoulders. "Girl up in Hanleytown, Mass. Old New England stock; poor but honest parents. That sort of thing. It's *my* fault: I took him cruising with me. And it happened."

"Pretty?"

"I didn't meet her. I saw her once quite a long way off. And as I'm near-sighted, why—! But of course I told Paul she was about the prettiest thing I'd ever seen."

"She must be having fits, poor girl; with Paul in the middle of a revolution, and not getting letters from him."

"Oh, he wrote her in detail about where he was going; told her the place itself was as safe as New York City; that it was only the lines of communication that were in a bad way. That he'd get letters to her if he could; but that she mustn't expect 'em."

"And still I think she must be having fits, poor little soul. What's her name?"

"I have so many things to remember," said Van Brunt, with a gesture indicative of helplessness. "I only heard it once or twice. You see I was working on other things."

"Nice sort of confidant and friend to a man in love—you are!"

"Wait a minute," said Van Brunt; "I remember it had something to do with the shore—Stone? No—Surf? Breaker?—Beach! That was it. Beach. Don't remember her first name—except that Paul raved about it. Funny New England name—probably Providence, Caution,

Truelove, Washdish, Scrubfloor, or something like that."

"But you're sure about the Beach?"

Van Brunt nodded, and the gentlemen having paid their score, left Carson's place, and moved on to the Tennis Club, where Mr. Waring was almost drowned in the tremendous wave of conviviality created by his arrival.

. . . . . .

Mr. Samuel Waring was a young man to whom all things were possible, with the exception of inactivity. He could not keep still, mentally or physically, and must always be briskly moving in some matter of mere pleasure or of sheer kindness.

Having written and had five copies made of his own letter to Henley and received Van Brunt's by special messenger, he sent his valet out with instructions to return with the largest and newest map of Mexico.

This being spread on the great library table in his father's house, Mr. Waring located and marked with an inked pen-point the exact whereabouts of the Lost Mines.

"Dorking?"

"Yes, sir."

"You see that black cross?"

"Yes, sir."

"It represents a group of mines belonging to Mr. Van Brunt."

"Yes, sir."

"My friend Mr. Henley is in charge of these mines."

"Yes, sir."

"These letters are to go to him at once. There are only two letters really—the others are duplicates. Two letters, and five pairs of duplicates. How would you propose to get them to Mr. Henley?"

"I should conceive that only an Indian could travel through Mexico in its present troubled state."

"You think that one of six Indians would surely get through?"

"Barring a convulsion of nature, sir, or a general cataclysm of some sort or other."

"Just what I think, Dorking. I want these letters to go at once."

"Yes, sir."

"You will wait for an answer somewhere just on this side of the border."

"Yes, sir."

"You have plenty of money?"

"Yes, sir."

"I shall be greatly obliged to you, Dorking."

"Thank you, sir."

The next matter in which Mr. Waring felt that he must move, concerned the girl to whom Paul Henley was engaged. He wished to see her personally; to assure her of his friendship and regard; of Paul's undoubted safety, and of the probabilities of his early return.

But he could not at once pay a visit, however brief, to Hanleytown. Having been for two years engaged upon his father's interests in various parts of the world, that implacable person demanded of him in writing a full report of his experiences, activities, and conclusions. Much depended on that report. It would demonstrate young Mr. Waring's fitness for being trained to step one day into his father's shoes, or it would not demonstrate it. And as the young man had always longed for his father's belief and trust—yes, and his friendship, that report seemed a matter of immense moment to him—a thing to be prepared at leisure, painstakingly and with whatever clearness of mind and clearness of language he could bring to bear upon its infinitely varied propositions.

If the business of the report began forthwith

to occupy the most of his day, he found leisure between four o'clock in the afternoon and the time when the more respectable restaurants close at night to cultivate his friendships—not least of which he counted the newest one of them all.

And he was soon seeing Silver Sands oftener than he was seeing anybody else.

XXV

I SHOULD be the last man to deny charm and beauty to the ladies of other countries. But I must affirm that after landing in New York from long travels, a man does not know how glad he is to be at home again until he has caught his first glimpse of a pretty American girl.

The great Waring interests do not lie in London, Paris, and Petrograd; but in regions where there are more wild beasts than people and more dark people than white. The women whom Samuel Waring had seen upon his travels were mostly black; they had flat noses, beautified by brass rings, and there was nothing romantic or mysterious about them, because they didn't wear any clothes.

When the young man reached New York, he was in excellent condition to fall in love. Between the pier and Delmonico's he saw from his cab windows at least a hundred pretty girls in all walks of life. Two years before he would not have thought them all so very pretty; a week hence he would be passing them by without a glance or a thought.

He reached Delmonico's, ran up the steps, and found himself face to face with Miss Reeves.

He had always admired her, and he was just about to admire her twice as much, when she introduced him to some one with the loveliest face he had ever seen—the gayest, sweetest face with the saddest eyes.

And forthwith he entered upon one of those courtships in which money, enthusiasm, and thoughtfulness take hands to shake a lady from her equilibrium. There was no use telling him that he mustn't do this, or that. He simply *would* do them. He sent her flowers every day. She complained bitterly and wore them. He engineered the most delightful parties for her. He took her for long spins in his car, for long walks in the parks. He sent her books that he had always loved and made her read them. He kept her supplied with the newest songs and waltzes. And he told all the young married women he knew how sweet and rare and charming she was, and for his sake they called on her, and then they made friends with her for their own.

But he did not make love to her. He wanted her to discover (without being told) that his friendship and companionship were necessary

to her; and he wanted her to trust him entirely and to feel that first, last, and always he was her friend; having more regard for her welfare than his own.

When his report was printed and submitted, Waring, mindful of his friend Paul Henley, said good-by to Silver Sands for three long days, journeyed to New Bedford, and thence by boat, through a golden autumnal haze, to Hanleytown.

The local telephone book did not contain the name of Beach.

"Good Lord," he thought, "her family must be awfully honest if they're so poor that they can't afford a telephone these days."

And he stepped into the post-office.

The postmaster, an elderly gentleman in a coal-black wig, tilted a trifle over his left ear, was agreeably occupied in deciphering the batch of post-cards which the citizens of Hanleytown had mailed that morning. He felt that this process, with an equal attention to post-cards received, kept him in closer touch with his fellow townsmen than any one other thing. The invention of seals and envelopes he regarded as two steps backward in the world's progress.

"Is there a family in Hanleytown by the name of Beach?"

The postmaster laid down his large brass-bound reading-glass, swung around on his high-stool, and faced the "general-delivery window" through which Samuel Waring was politely smiling.

"There *was* a family name of Beach. Summer visitors. But they ain't been here for three seasons. Sarah—the daughter that is—was a great one to write post-cards; she was engaged to be married to a feller named Pullins out in Dayton, Ohio."

"What a memory you have!" exclaimed Waring. So the name wasn't Beach. He was at a loss for a moment.

"Do you remember a man named Henley who was here last summer on a yacht for a few days?"

"Paul Henley, New York, went straight from here to Mexico. Kept sending letters and post-cards to a girl right in this town. Sent her telegrams, too, if people speak the truth. He was a pleasant-spoken young feller; but he talked all the time. You couldn't get a word in edgewise."

"Does he still write to her?"

"Dunno," said the postmaster. "She's gone away, too."

"But wasn't her name Beach—or something like it?"

"No, sir. Her name was Sands—Silver Sands."

It is a curious fact that the friendly, pleasant smile continued to adorn Mr. Samuel Waring's face. But he felt as if the world was falling about his ears. And it is equally curious that his first collected thought was not for himself, but for her. "Now I know," he thought, "why her eyes are so sad."

"You a friend of hers?"

"Why, yes," said Mr. Waring; "I am. Which is her father's house?"

The postmaster came out of his sanctum into the sunshine and directed him with infinite particularity. And Waring thanked him, and walked away (like a man not yet awakened from a disturbing dream) to a house four doors up the street on the right.

"And I've been doing my best," he thought, "to make her forget poor old Paul and fall in love with me."

He straightened his shoulders, and his somewhat homely, thick-featured face took on a look of great strength and nobility. But he strolled for many hours about the picturesque old town, before he found the heart to knock at the door of her father's house.

XXVI

FIFTEEN minutes after he had returned to New York, Waring was walking into Silver's little living-room and holding out both his hands to her. There was a new sort of smile on his face. It was fatherly.

"How could you!" he said.

"How could I what?"

"Keep me in such deep, dark ignorance about everything?"

She looked at him, very sweetly, her eyebrows raised in a mild curiosity.

"For instance you never told me that you came from Hanleytown."

"You never asked me."

"And you never told me why you look so sad sometimes."

"It's so long since I had any word from him," she said simply.

"But he told you he wouldn't be able to write. He made that clear."

She shook her head slowly.

"Van Brunt told me. When they left Hanleytown, Paul sat up half the night writing to you.

He must have told you where he was going and why. Not even *why?* Why, Silver, he wanted money very badly so that you and he— And Van Brunt, who's almost as fond of him as I am, gave him this chance in Mexico. And you didn't know?"

"I gathered from letters and things," said Silver, "that he was going to Mexico—but not why or for how long."

"Then it's quite obvious that you didn't get the one letter that was important to get. It was written on the *Aphrodite*, and it must have been mailed in New Bedford, in time to catch the next morning's mail back to Hanleytown. Do you remember when the *Aphrodite* left?"

She blushed a little, and told him the day and the hour.

"And you got no letter the next day?"

She shook her head. And Waring thought for a moment. "Did you go for the mail yourself?"

"Of course," she said simply; "but some one else had already called for our mail."

"Your father?"

"No. Mr. Hedden."

"McKay Hedden?"

"He was staying with us—working on the play."

"Well," said Waring, "you didn't get an important letter. That's certain. Tell me. Have you thought hard things about Paul?"

"Sometimes it's been very hard to understand."

"But you understand now? . . . Silver, that boy is as true as steel. For God's sake don't go to doubting him."

"I thought maybe he'd been a little carried away and that when he got off by himself—he—just wanted everything to die a natural death."

Waring smiled at her somewhat facetiously.

"That may be your cautious Puritan father's method," said he, "but you want to remember at all times that Paul Henley is a real man. It is impossible to conceive of his shirking a real duty—like telling a girl fair and square that he no longer cared for her. But maybe *you've* tired of *him!*"

"Sometimes," she said quietly, "I think that he is in trouble and needs me with him, and then because I can't go, it seems to me as if I'd just die."

Waring walked to one of the windows and stood looking out. Presently Silver joined him, and laid one hand lightly, like a fallen leaf, on his shoulder.

"Silver," he said, "since you've been in New

York, have you talked with any of Paul's friends about him? You've seen quite a lot of Van Brunt. You could have asked him things."

"But you see," said she, "if I'd learned that they knew where he was and were getting letters from him, and all that it would have just killed me."

"You should have had more faith in Paul, Silver."

"Yes, I know," she said humbly.

"Do you ever lie, Silver?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose so."

"I wish you'd tell one lie for me."

"What?"

"When Paul comes back, you tell him that you never doubted him for one second. If it hurts me to think that you've been doubting him, think how it would hurt *him*."

"I'm no good," said Silver very humbly, "I know that."

"I'll invite some marines to meet you at supper," said Mr. Waring, "and you can tell that to them. There's no use telling it to me. . . . I paid a long call on your father and mother yesterday, Silver. They gave me a delicious supper, and they sent you their very best love."

"You've been to Hanleytown!"

"Oh, no. I ran into them in a small seaport of Tangiers. . . . I boarded the *Gopher.*"

"You *didn't!*"

"Your father thought you'd like to know that she was in apple-pie condition. Some of the neighbors dropped in, and I told them all about you. What a success you've made already, and how everybody that knows you loves you. And it developed that everybody in Hanleytown loves you, too. And all the boys and girls are getting up private theatricals, and reading Shakespeare and Ibsen——"

"But how did you happen to go to Hanleytown?"

"Why, Van Brunt told me that Paul was engaged to a Hanleytown girl. And I thought I'd run up and give her a jolly about him; same as I've given you. It would have saved quite some trouble if Van had remembered that her name was Silver Sands instead of something or other Beach. But I'm glad I went. I loved meeting your father and mother. And you've a postmaster in Hanleytown whom I propose to cultivate. I think he remembers everything that ever happened—everything. And besides I want to know if he always wears his wig over his left ear. Rehearsals been going all right?"

"Mr. Hedden says he's very pleased."

"I wonder where he got the idea of 'When My Ship Comes In'?"

"Oh, it just came to him!" exclaimed Silver with enthusiasm.

Waring turned away his head to conceal from her a sudden desire for sardonic laughter. And he thought: "Yes, it just came to him—with stamps on the envelope."

Silver could not keep her mind off the play for long stretches of time. She began to talk about it now.

"And I'm so frightened," she said; "every morning brings that awful first night twenty-four hours nearer. And we're not even going to have the small mercy of opening in Newark or Atlantic City, and trying our wings a little before we really try to fly. Mr. Hedden feels so sure of the play and so sure of all the company—even poor little me—that we're going to open right on Broadway. And if it isn't a success it'll be all my fault. And I don't know what I shall do."

"If you're as frightened as all that," said Waring, "suppose I get an injunction to have the play stopped."

"Oh, but you couldn't!"

He laughed.

It was in his mind, naturally, to tell her just how the idea of the play had come to Hedden; how it was nothing but a big steal of property belonging to Paul Henley.

But he had not the heart to tell her, and he questioned if he had the right. It was possible also, though not probable, that Henley had received compensation for his ideas and inventions.

"How would she feel," he thought, "if she learned that she was helping Hedden to steal credit and royalties from her best young man? And yet I ought to tell her. I think I will."

"What are you thinking about?" she asked. "You haven't said a word for two whole minutes."

"If anything happened so that you couldn't appear in 'When My Ship Comes In'—how would you feel? Would you be unhappy about it?"

"Yes," she said, "everybody's been so good to me. I want to make good. . . . But nothing could happen, could it? Unless I dropped dead or something like that. If it hadn't been for the play keeping me so busy and all, I think I'd have gone crazy up there in Hanleytown—wondering what had become of Paul. And I love the play for its own sake.

She blushed and laughed shyly.

"Do you?"

"Parts of it," she said, "make me think of Paul. He has a certain way of looking at everything. I suppose you'd call it a philosophy, wouldn't you? And the figurehead that comes to life in Mr. Hedden's play looks at life in just the same way. And sometimes when I'm rehearsing I pretend that I'm really saying things to Paul, instead of to the figurehead that comes to life—and when it's like that everybody praises me, and that makes me happy, because it's just as if they were praising Paul. Isn't it?"

"Just exactly," said Waring with a laugh.

And a little later he had said good-by to her, and was driving to his father's house.

"If I'd told her," he thought, "it would have been like breaking a little child's doll favorite. And yet she ought to know. Even innocently she ought not to be helping to cheat poor old Paul."

"Mr. Waring come up-town?"

"Yes, sir. He's in the library."

The face of Waring, senior, was massive, clean-shaven, and very gray. When the lips parted in one of their rare smiles it was a face with a strong, masculine charm.

He smiled now, and held out a thick but shapely hand.

"I congratulate you," he said, "upon your report. It was exactly what I hoped for from a son of mine."

"The report—oh, yes—I—glad you liked it."

The father's keen eyes sought the son's.

"Are you in trouble?"

"I'm not very happy," said Waring. "But you wouldn't call it trouble. I think I know what's right to do. And I propose to do it. Trouble is when you're unhappy, and don't know what to do."

"Work," said his father, "is an excellent palliation for unhappiness. When do you wish to start in? I was particularly interested in your views of the transportation possibilities in the river country. If you wish——"

"I'm tremendously pleased that you've got some confidence in me, father. I'd like to stay in New York until Paul Henley comes back from Mexico. . . . Then," and a little bitterness crept into his voice, "I'll be ready to shake the dust of this burg from my feet for——"

"Sam," said his father briefly, "this isn't the first time you've been miserable about some young woman."

Sam Waring scowled at first, then broke into a smile and a laugh.

"No, it's not the first time," he said; "and I hope to heaven it isn't the last!"

XXVII

ONE morning, finding her purse quite empty, Silver called upon the treasurer of the McKay Hedden Theatre Co., as Hedden had told her to do, to have it filled. The treasurer gave her what she asked for, but not casually as was his habit. He threw in a few words of advice and warning.

"Money is rather tight just now," he said; "Mr. Hedden has lavished money on your play, and now he is beginning to need large sums for Mrs. Michelin's new piece. It seems to me that we have been very liberal with you. Advances made to you from time to time; bills paid for you by us amount already to many thousands of dollars."

"But I've only done what Mr. Hedden told me to do. He told me not to think about money."

"I don't know what Mr. Hedden told you," said the treasurer somewhat sourly. "I don't deal with speeches, but with figures."

"The advances were all to be taken out of my salary," said Silver.

"Then it's high time they were," said the treasurer curtly.

"What do I owe the company, please?"

The treasurer sent for the figures, added the sum which he had just given her, and displayed them to her. Silver gasped. She felt actually frightened.

"I had no idea!" she exclaimed.

"Nobody ever has except the man who has to find the money."

"May I take them and look them over?"

"Certainly."

"Thank you! And good morning."

"Good morning, Miss Sands."

She took the elevator for McKay's private offices on the top floor.

Mrs. Michelin, looking very browbeaten and worried, was just coming out.

"What's wrong?" asked Silver.

"Oh, nothing. It's the new part. It's very hard. And I'm so slow and stupid."

She gave her fine head a shake and winked bravely through incipient tears.

"Never mind," she said, "it'll all come out in the wash."

Silver sent her name in, and was told presently that Mr. Hedden could give her five minutes.

He was seated at his great writing-table turn-

ing over a piece of weak-tea colored Venetian lace. It was a baby's cap. As Silver came forward, he rose, thrust the cap to one side, followed it with a wistful look, and remarked:

"I love children, Silver."

Silver laid the schedule of her debts on the table, and said simply:

"Please look that over. Isn't it awful!"

Hedden turned the sheets over carelessly, noted the total, and said:

"What's it all about?"

"I wanted some ready money," she said, "and the treasurer wasn't very nice about it. And it seems that this is what I've already had, in cash, or bills paid for me—to be paid back out of my salary."

"Your salary *is* . . .?"

"Two fifty you said."

"*Two* fifty?" He raised his eyebrows, seated himself, spoke into his telephone and requested that Miss Sands's contract be taken out of the safe and brought to him.

And then, for the first time, Silver had a real look at the document which she had signed.

Her first comment, in a tone of dismay, was "*Five* years!" Her second, "*fifty* dollars a week." Then she looked at him with grave, level eyes.

"You told me *two* fifty when I asked you," she said; "you remember I did ask you."

"I must have said *fifty*, Silver, and you thought I said *two* fifty."

"But it will take me over ten years to pay back what I owe, at fifty dollars a week."

"I admit that we've been very liberal with advances."

"And for five years!" she exclaimed.

He looked puzzled and unhappy.

"But, Silver, you signed the contract."

"Yes. But I wasn't given a good chance to read it, and I relied on everything that you'd promised and allowed me to believe."

"Fifty dollars a week is pretty good money for a beginner, Silver. Ask any one on Broadway. . . . Please—please don't look like that."

He broke into a boyish laugh. "Silver," he went on, "you and I have about as much business sense as a couple of geese. As a matter of fact, *I* never read that contract, either. And it's been drawn up, according to custom, instead of according to the directions I gave. The question is what are we going to do about it?"

"You did mean me to have two fifty, and not get into such a hole as this, didn't you?" asked Silver

"Of course," he said, "and you shall have it, and you shan't be in a hole. The only question is how is it best to straighten the thing out?"

"Why, tear the contract up and make a new one."

"You forget that I signed the contract, too—*for the firm.* It isn't a private arrangement between you and me. It's a business deal between you and a company in which I happen to own stock."

"But if you said that it was a mistake."

"Oh, I'll arrange the matter. Don't worry about that. But I want to save my face. Silver, I'll have to throw myself on your mercy. I *can't*—I simply can't go to my business associates and confess to them that I signed a contract for the firm *without* reading it. Don't you see? Suppose, in drawing up the contract, the clerk had made his error the other way. Suppose, that instead of writing fifty for two hundred and fifty, he had written twenty-five hundred. It would have been a perfectly good contract."

"But I would have let you off."

"Of course you would. I know that. And in the same way I'll make things right for you. For the present, though, the contract will have to stand. Later, after the play has been run-

ning a while, I'll tell my associates that in justice to you it must be cancelled, and a more favorable one drawn. In the meanwhile, Silver, I'll take the liberty of paying you the difference out of my own pocket. It was my mistake, and it's my privilege to right it."

"It all makes me feel so stingy, and sordid and mean," said Silver; "but you did encourage me to spend on a two-fifty scale, didn't you? And," she broke into a laugh, "I've done it."

"I will give you," he said "five hundred dollars a week. Two hundred is for your expenses, and three hundred is for you to make payments with to the company for what they have advanced. Then when we draw the new contract, we'll arrange it so that everything between you and me will come right automatically. Silver," he looked very mischievous, "I wouldn't have my partner know what a mess I made of this contract for anything under the sun! Now then, is everything satisfactory?"

"Of course it is! I knew there'd been some mistake somewhere. But I just couldn't believe that *you* had done anything sharp. And I didn't—really."

"Thank you, Silver," he said frankly. "And now about payments. If I write you a check

every week, it will get known and talked about. That wouldn't do. You'll have to come to me, here, every Monday, and I'll give you the money in cash. You'll give me a receipt just so we won't get all mixed up again. Then you'll go down two flights to the treasurer, pay him three hundred dollars on what you owe the company, and then you'll go to the bank and deposit the other two hundred or else you'll go to the nearest department store and spend it out of hand. And meanwhile, as the contract still stands, the company is still paying you fifty dollars a week, and that will also go to wipe out your debts——"

He leaned back, chuckling, and clapping his hands together.

"Silver," said he, "let's you and I get out of this theatrical business, and go in for high finance!"

And she laughed, too, and she thought that for all his oddities and eccentricities, and for all the stories that were circulated against him, he was at heart chivalrous and honorable. And from her own heart she felt that a great load of oppression and perplexity had been lifted.

As she was waiting for the elevator, he came to the outer door of his office and called to her:

"Miss Rockefeller—oh, Miss Rockefeller."

"Mr. Rothschild, I believe?" returned Silver with complete gravity.

"Don't forget—every Monday."

"Here?"

"No, in the gold vault of the subtreasury."

Then they both laughed aloud.

XXVIII

RELIEVED about money matters, Silver felt that nothing was wanting to complete her happiness but a successful opening of the play and the return from Mexico of Paul Henley. That Henley was alive, loved her, and would come back safe and sound, was continually dinned into her by Sam Waring. He gave out such an atmosphere of courage and optimism that she could not but be infected. And she caught these good states of mind from him as a child catches the measles from a playmate.

But the thought of the play gave her awful sinking spells at times. Some tactless person was always (so it seemed) telling her frightful anecdotes of stage fright; that sudden devastation of the reason from which no actor is ever quite proof. She was told of Bonner, who had played highly finished comedy parts for fifty years from the age of seven as calmly as the cook makes up the morning fire in the kitchen range, and then, at the opening night of a new play, in the most important scene (by which it would succeed or

fail), completely forgot his part, lost his presence of mind, and was finally escorted from the stage in a sort of epileptic fit. She was told of a venerable bishop who, at a fashionable wedding, when about to marry the happy pair, was seized with stage fright and began to bury them.

Her sleep became troubled with nightmares, in which she forgot her lines, in which her vocal chords became suddenly paralyzed, in which her feet became cemented to the floor. In one very awful and recurring nightmare, the audience would rise to her first entrance with howls and screams of laughter, and she, catching sight of herself in a mirror, would perceive that she was not the heroine of the piece, but a little donkey with very long ears.

Waring didn't laugh at her, but he comforted her.

"Any worth-while person," he said, "feels the way you do about tackling something new and important. It isn't fear. It's just a process the nerves go through, getting ready for a great ordeal. I've known football players—great players—who five minutes before play began could have been bullied, knocked down, and trampled on by a ten-year-old child. *They've* some reason to be scared. Because eleven other strong men and fifteen or

twenty thousand people are hoping to see them make a complete failure. But everybody wants to see you succeed; every actor in the cast and every man, woman, and child in the audience. And besides, Paul will be back, and you won't be able to think about anything but him."

"I wonder where the messengers are now?"

"We'll hear something soon. Don't worry about that."

Every morning when she wakened, Silver's first act was to reach for the telephone and give Waring's number. And though sometimes, having been up late, she waked late, the faithful fellow never left home until he had heard from her.

"Good morning, Silver. Are you awake?"

"Not yet. Is there any news?"

"Not so far. Had breakfast?"

"Just going to ring for it."

"When'll you be visible?"

"'Bout an hour and a half."

"Does it really take a girl that long to get dressed?"

"It takes longer unless she hurries!"

But one morning saw a great change in this daily exchange.

"Good morning, Silver. Are you awake?"

"Not yet. Is there any news?"

"Yes, there is. Have you had breakfast?"

"Don't frighten me!"

"I'm not. I'm teasing you."

"Have you heard from Paul?"

"Yes. I'll bring the telegram round as soon as you're dressed—say, in about an hour and a half."

"Sam," she cried, "I'll be dressed in five minutes and if you keep me waiting a second, I'll never forgive."

"Can a girl really get dressed in five minutes?"

"Unless she's all alone and it hooks up the back. Please—please hurry."

Five minutes later, Mr. Waring, having broken the speed regulations and escaped arrest, rang the bell of Silver's apartment. She was not only dressed and waiting, but was half through breakfast.

"Is he on his way, Sam?"

Sam began to feel in his pockets.

"I must have forgotten the telegram."

"No, you haven't."

"By Jove, I wish some young woman would get as excited as this about me. Here's your old telegram." And she read almost at a glance:

Country pretty quiet around here. Think all right to come to New York for a few days. Thanks for friendly interest. Can the thing be stopped?

"Can what thing be stopped, Sam?"

"I knew you'd want to see the whole message, but that last sentence is just between Paul and me. He'll tell you about it himself—or else——"

"Or else what?"

"Or else he won't."

"But there isn't anything about me in the telegram."

"Why should there be? He doesn't know that we even know each other. And probably he's sent a telegram to you in Hanleytown. You ought to get it some time to-day."

"But if it's so easy for him to come to New York, why hasn't he sent me any word before now?"

"Perhaps until one of my messages reached him, he didn't know that the country was quiet. Perhaps he felt that he had no right to risk one of his own men. But what does all that matter? The important thing to think of is just this: He's coming. He's on his way!"

XXIX

A WEEK passed, ten days. The delight of feeling that Henley was on his way, and that the country through which he must pass to reach the border was comparatively quiet, changed to anxiety and then to downright fear.

"Sam," said Silver one day, and she was looking very white and tired; "I can't sleep. If I don't hear from him that he's all right, it will kill me."

"That's not fair," said Sam; "wait till you hear that something's *wrong*, before you talk like that. Did you ever travel through wild country? Thousands of things, not in the least dangerous, can delay you. A mule gets sick and has to be nursed back to health and good humor. You run short of food and have to hunt for a day or so in the opposite direction from which you want to go. If you are travelling on foot, perhaps you get a blister on your heel, and no man loves a girl enough to walk a hundred miles for her on a blistered heel. Of course, if the going was good he could hop——"

"I *know* that something has happened to him."

"You don't know anything of the kind. Did he say *when* he was going to start? No. He implied that he would start as soon as he could——"

"I tell you, Sam, women have intuition about the people they love, and I know that something has happened to him."

In the street far below a newsboy suddenly began to make ambitious efforts to turn himself inside out with great cries of "Yux—tra! Yux—tra!" And with these cries he mingled others that had a faint sound of "War" and of "Mexico."

"Something about Mexico, anyhow," said Sam; "I'll slip down and get a copy."

He returned in five minutes, a newspaper with red head-lines in his hand, and upon his face a smile at once amused and tender.

"That," said he, "for your woman's intuition." And he read aloud:

"*Rich American mine owner succeeds in reaching El Paso after a series of desperate adventures. Reports the whole of Northern Mexico in a state of anarchy. Mr. Paul Henley of this city*——"

With a strange little cry Silver snatched the extra from Waring's hands, and having with her own eyes read Paul's name and assured herself that he was safe, she folded the inky sheets to her heart and began to cry. Then Waring, just as a

big brother might, folded Silver to his heart (newspaper and all) and patted her clumsily on the back. And Silver's April mood passed, and she became preternaturally gay, and began to laugh and talk about two hundred words to the minute. And Miss Reeves came in and was told that she, too, must be beside herself with joy and excitement (and at once pleased) or Silver would know the reason why.

Then Mr. Waring said that he would go to his house and see if a telegram hadn't come from Paul. And he left, very smiling and gay, and reached the street very grave and sad.

"Oh, Silver!" exclaimed Miss Reeves, "how can you?"

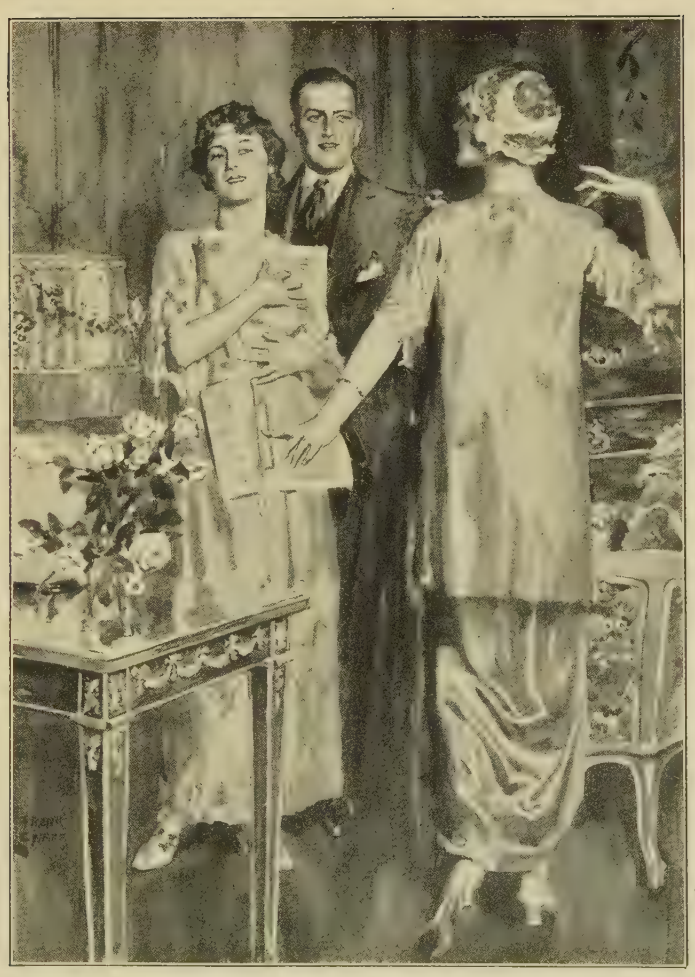
"How can I what?"

"Carry on this way about Mr. Henley right under poor Sam Waring's nose."

"Why, he's as glad as I am. Paul is his best, best friend."

"Yes, and he's Paul's best friend, and he's desperately in love with the girl Paul's going to marry. And some young woman, whom I won't mention by name, is as blind as a mole and as self-centred as an actor-manager."

"Oh," cried Silver, all the smiles and gladness gone, and a look of the greatest concern in her eyes;



Miss Reeves came in and was told that she, too, must be beside herself with joy and excitement . . . or Silver would know the reason why

"it's not true. He never said or did anything that—that——"

Miss Reeves yawned, and admonished Silver: "No. He never said or did anything that—that—He never—after seeing you just once—came to see you every day. He never sent you flowers every day. He never made all his influential friends come to see you; he never spent hour after hour at the theatre watching you rehearse; he never gathered all his resources for giving people good times into a ball and laid them at your feet. . . . Silver, didn't you *know* that he was in love with you?"

"I never thought about it at all. I just accepted the good times——"

"You just encouraged him, you mean."

"I wanted to be amused because I was unhappy. And he never so much as said one word that could make me think——"

"Either you're telling the truth, or you're an outrageous flirt."

Silver looked Miss Reeves for a moment in the eyes, then went to her swiftly, and took her by the shoulders, and she said:

"I certainly *have* been blind!"

Miss Reeves turned her face away and sniffed quite audibly. Silver shook her gently by the shoulders, and smiling a little wanly:

"Yes, I *have* encouraged him. I see that now—outrageously. It's as if I'd borrowed a great deal of money from him, and had to pay him back. I do have to pay him back—don't I? It'll be a little hard to explain to Paul, but it's the right thing to do—obviously. If Sam feels the way you say he does—why, it'll be what he wants me to do. And it's evidently what you want me to do."

"You mean you'll marry Sam?"

Silver still smiled.

"That's your idea of what I ought to do—isn't it?"

"Oh, no—Silver, not if you don't love him."

"Truly?"

"That would be wickeder than flirting with him."

"Then I'm not to marry him?"

Silver turned away and walked to the nearest window. Miss Reeves followed and slid an arm round her waist.

"It's a funny world, Silver!"

"Have you always cared about him?"

"Always."

"How you must hate *me!*"

"I don't. Not a little bit. If it weren't for you, I wouldn't see him so often. . . . It's a silly mess, isn't it? Sam loves you and I love

Sam; and Sam can't have you and I can't have Sam. . . . And pretty soon he'll go away again to forget about you and when he comes back I'll be a little older than I am now—and I never was a beauty, or a success. . . ."

"If Sam had any sense at all!"

Somehow Miss Reeves felt a little comforted by this strong partisan outbreak.

"Has Sam ever told you that he cared about me?"

"Never."

"Then how do you know?"

"I can't help knowing. If you were in my boots, you'd understand."

"Make him tell you in so many words."

"Why? I don't know that that would add to my pleasure in life."

"I don't mean just to make him tell you once. Make him tell you every time you're together. Make him talk about nothing but me——"

"But why?"

"Because in time he will get so tired of the subject that he will want to talk about something else. . . ."

Again Miss Reeves found herself a little comforted by Silver's words. The color came brightly into her cheeks and she looked very pretty.

"Suppose we ought to be moving toward rehearsal."

"Suppose so."

Then they kissed each other.

XXX

MR. CRAWLEY, white-faced, furtive-eyed, one shoulder higher than the other, slipped noiselessly into McKay Hedden's office and laid the morning paper under his master's nose.

"Thank you," said Hedden. "Anything I ought to read?"

"Unless you might be interested to know that Mr. Henley has returned from Mexico."

"What Mr. Henley?"

"You remember, sir, we returned him a play in manuscript after taking a copy of it. You considered it such a humorous example of play-writing that you wished to be able to read it aloud to your friends."

"I indistinctly remember something of the sort," said Hedden.

"Of course I am no judge of dramatic art, but it seemed to me, while making the copy of Mr. Henley's production, that it had possibilities."

"We are still living in the age of miracles," said Hedden, "and all things are possible."

Then he picked up the newspaper, and began to

run his eyes over the head-lines. Mr. Crawley stepped back two paces, intertwined his long fingers and waited. Now in the ordinary course of a day's work, Mr. Crawley, after bringing in the paper, would have passed out of the office upon some other of his multitudinous duties. Presently McKay Hedden cleared his throat.

"You wish to see me about something, Mr. Crawley?"

"Any other time would do as well."

McKay Hedden for some moments continued his perusal of head-lines, then turned over several sheets at once and began to study the columns devoted to dramatic advertisement. Mr. Crawley blew his nose.

Hedden laid the paper down and turned so as to face his confidential clerk.

"Well?" said he.

"I dropped in at a rehearsal the other afternoon, sir," said Mr. Crawley.

"Mrs. Michelin's play, or Miss Sands's?"

"'When My Ship Comes In,'" said Mr. Crawley.

"What did you think of it?"

"Beautiful, Mr. Hedden. A knock-out!"

"It's unusual, at least."

"Oh, sir, I could hear the sea in a storm; the very lines are salty in the mouth. It has a beauty,

a freshness. I did not believe that such a drama existed even in your mind, Mr. Hedden."

"I am very much gratified to hear this."

"But I cannot help wondering, sir, what Mr. Henley will think of it all."

"What has Mr. Henley to do with it?"

Mr. Crawley shrugged his shoulders—the high one, all the way to its adjacent ear.

"I have often observed," said he, "that a thought which a man imagines to be original with himself is nearly always traceable to the thinking processes of some other man. It has occurred to me that certain ideas of Mr. Henley's play, which you rejected, have lain dormant in your brain, to blossom all at once into full flower-like beauty."

"Pull up a chair," said Hedden, and when Mr. Crawley was seated: "You think Henley has a case against us?"

"We have beaten cases as good in the courts."

"Then what's worrying you?"

"Once before, you remember, there was some talk of calling me as a witness. I am a nervous man, Mr. Hedden, and I dread to think what effect the ordeal of a cross-examination might have upon me."

"On that occasion we arranged a little holiday for you in Europe."

"Yes, sir, and the talk of calling me to the witness-chair ended in smoke."

"There is no pressing need for you to take a vacation, Mr. Crawley. We will cross that bridge when we come to it."

"And besides that," said Mr. Crawley, "I did not enjoy Europe. I have given the best years of my life to office work. It has always been my ambition to retire, and devote my remaining years to pomology."

"To what?"

"The culture of pomes—apples—pears."

"I should be sorry to lose you, Mr. Crawley."

"It is hardly a question of that, as yet. For I have no money to retire upon."

"Mr. Crawley, you aren't, after all these years of mutual confidence—you aren't, I say, going to make an effort to extort money from me by threats?"

"Even if that were the case, I could not expose you without exposing myself. On the other hand, if I should ever be subjected to the ordeal of a cross-examination, I might do both."

"You want to be staked to a fruit farm—is that it? Well, my dear fellow, speak of this again—in the spring. This is no time to plant apples!"

"I beg pardon, sir, but I have read that Professor Snowly, the great authority, receives daily letters from persons desirous of starting orchards, and asking him when they should plant the trees. For such queries he has a printed answer; simply the word: 'To-day.'"

"I have a great many calls upon me just now, Mr. Crawley. But after the new play has been running a month or so——"

"I could negotiate your note, Mr. Hedden."

"This *is* blackmail, Mr. Crawley!"

"I have done your dirty work for years, Mr. Hedden; and I have nothing to show for it—nothing. Any other rich man would have seen to it that I got my deserts. I have only to go to Mr. Henley, sir, with what I know——"

The desk telephone rang sharply, and both the men jumped as if some one had suddenly taken a shot at them.

Mr. Hedden put the receiver to his ear, listened and turned an agitated countenance to Mr. Crawley.

"It's Henley—wants to see me. This is your doing."

"No, sir, it is not."

"Then what does he want?"

"Better see him, sir. He has probably talked to

Miss Sands; she has probably given him some account of the play. . . ."

"Trouble! Trouble!" exclaimed Mr. Hedden. "You'll stick by me, Crawley, in case he's ugly? It'll be all right about the orchard, I promise."

"Then I'll stick by you."

Hedden sighed his relief, and spoke into the telephone.

"I will see Mr. Henley."

He hung up the receiver.

"And now, the promise, Mr. Hedden."

"It's all right; I've promised."

"There is just time to put it in writing, sir. Ten thousand will see me through."

"*Ten thousand!*"

"Mr. Henley is on his way up in the elevator. He will be here in a minute . . . you have just time. . . . The check-book is in the little drawer on the right. Date it two months ahead, if you prefer. . . ."

"This is robbery!"

"I am a soldier of fortune, sir. Better buy me before the enemy charges and I desert to his colors."

"If necessary, Mr. Crawley, you will perjure yourself for me?"

"Of course, sir. I might almost say, as usual."

Mr. Hedden drew, signed, and blotted the check. Mr. Crawley blotted it, after observing that it was correctly drawn. There then followed that awkward silence which always obtains when money is given and taken. Mr. Crawley broke it.

"It is my intention," said he, "to plant nothing but Newtown pippins. . . ."

XXXI

WHEN Hedden had first determined to appropriate Henley's ideas, all eventualities except the pleasant and profitable ones had seemed negligibly remote. But with Henley, a strong, resolute, injured man, swiftly approaching, the outcome seemed as likely to be violence as anything else. That certain men could not set eyes on him, even for the first time, without wanting to punch his head, was a fact not unknown to McKay Hedden; and that he had once been horsewhipped and kicked by another whom the courts had allowed him to despoil, was one of his freshest and least tolerable memories.

A small boy opened a large door, and Paul Henley, very thin and brown, came forward, limping slightly and smiling.

Hedden, studying the young man's approach as a mouse may study that of a cat, saw nothing very reassuring in the fact that the young man smiled. Men lifting a gun to down a rabbit smile. Prize-fighters smile; bandits, surgeons, and hostile lawyers. One's own lawyer always pulls a long face.

Still McKay Hedden was able to manage a smile himself, to hold out his hand, and to exclaim histrionically: "The man from Mexico!"

"I am very anxious," said Henley, "to see a rehearsal of Miss Sands's play. And I was told that I must come to you for a pass."

"My dear Mr. Henley," exclaimed Hedden, "the thing is impossible. The rules of my theatre . . ."

Mr. Crawley, standing in the background, attentive, cringing, bold, cynical, lifted his hand to his mouth and hid a smile.

"I am asking you to make an exception of me," said Henley; "because, as you know, Miss Sands and I are engaged to be married, and anything so vitally interesting to her as her first play must be equally interesting and important to me. . . . I should disturb no one. Mr. Waring, who seems to be an exception to your rules, has promised to go with me, and keep me in order."

McKay Hedden's thinking processes were very quick. If the matter ever came into the courts, it would not look well for him to have blocked Henley's wish to attend rehearsals. Also, if the pass were granted at once, courteously and ingenuously, it might have a disarming effect. So he gave a pleasant laugh and tossed up his hands with the gesture of a man surrendering.

"No use trying to resist a desperado from over the border," he said. "Your engagement to Miss Sands, to tell the truth I had forgotten all about it, is like a pistol at my head. . . . Mr. Crawley, write out a pass for Mr. Henley and bring it to me to sign. . . . And how did you leave Mexico?"

"At night and in a hurry," said Henley. "There were fireworks, but I didn't wait to see them."

"I noticed as you came in that you limped. I hope . . ."

Mr. Henley blushed under his tan.

"Nobody but Achilles was ever shot in the heel," he said; "my wound is a blister produced by sharp sand in a wet boot."

At this moment Mr. Crawley brought the pass for Hedden to sign.

"I hope," said he, "that Mr. Henley will like the plot—so fresh—so original—so full of things that no one has ever thought of before."

Hedden bit his lips and Crawley retired very quietly, his high shoulder twitching, and his tongue in his cheek.

"Crawley is right," said Hedden. "I hope you will like the play. We have all grown very fond of Silver, and if the play were to fail, I think it would almost break her heart. At first I was am-

bitious to make a success with it for my own sake; but latterly I have been thinking only of her."

"You have been wonderfully kind to her, and considerate of her," said Henley. "She told me."

"Then you've seen her?"

Henley regarded the manager with amazement.

"On my way to New York," he said, "I received her address by telegram. I reached here at six o'clock this morning. And it seems that she and my friend Waring are always up and about at six o'clock, because there they were in the station to meet me! And then Waring vanished. Yes. . . . I've seen her."

Five minutes later, Henley stepped into a taxicab which contained Sam Waring.

"Well," said the latter.

"He made no bones about the pass."

"Wise man. He wants you to think that his conscience is as free and innocent as a summer zephyr. But it's your play, Paul—body and soul."

"We must think of that," said Henley gently, "and of other things. But first, last, and all the time, we must think about Silver."

"I'd block the thing now, if I were you—I'd get Silver off the stage before she's had a taste of success. And I'd run off with her."

"She's gone too far now," said Henley. "It would be cruel not to let her have her chance. . . . Besides, though the Lost Mines will stand me in something handsome some day, sure, just now I'm not in a position to talk high and mighty."

"My dear fellow," began Waring.

But Henley interrupted with an affectionate gesture of protest.

"A man's friend," he said, "can blow him to a sable-lined coat, to a black pearl pin, or even an automobile, if he so desires, but he can't blow him to a wife. But, don't worry about me. If Hedden thought *that* play was good enough to steal, wait till he reads the one I've been doing in Mexico. . . ."

"Here we are. No, I won't come up. Give her my best! See you later—at rehearsal."

Paul Henley entered the elevator.

"What floor?"

"The heaventh," said the jocose youth.

Sam Waring drove to a Fifth Avenue jeweller's and bought a very large solitaire black pearl pin; then he drove to a furrier's and bought a sable-lined coat. And then, because he was always thoughtful, he drove to a toy-shop.

"Paul," he argued, "has no place to put a real car, and he can't afford a chauffeur. . . ."

"Anything especial you wish to look at, sir?" Waring smiled.

"An automobile, please," he said; "one of your best. It's for a very good boy."

XXXII

"BUT I never got that letter," said Silver, "if I had, I wouldn't be here."

"Then I'm glad you didn't get it." His arm tightened, and she laughed happily.

"I was all over being stage-struck; and then no word came from you. And I had to do something. And Mr. Hedden talked with father and mum and somehow or other persuaded them. And first thing I knew here was little me doing high life and stage life—"

"And forgetting all about big me."

"I forgot about you as much as that——"

A short and very sweet silence.

"But, Silver, dear, I want you to be my wife."

"Aren't I going to be?"

"I mean I don't want to see you billed in electric letters, seven feet high, as Silver Sands when you're really Mrs. Paul Henley. I want you to leave the stage."

"But I will as soon as I can. It wouldn't be fair to Mr. Hedden to leave him in the lurch, after all the money he's spent on the play. I've simply got to wait till it dies a natural death."

"But if it weren't for Hedden, and your sense of obligation?"

"Then I'd do just whatever you wanted me to do."

"But after working so hard, wouldn't you be disappointed at not appearing in the play at all?"

She thought this over seriously, and said: "Yes. You see I feel sometimes as if the play was a ship, and that I was one of the crew, and that it would be wicked to leave her till she was safe in the home port. You see, a play that you're in, if it's the right sort of a play, grows very dear to you and you get to feel a great loyalty to it. If it should be a failure, I'd feel, not how unhappy and humiliated I was, but how unhappy the poor play itself must be, after trying so hard to be nice and well-behaved and to get itself liked. And then it's been a comfort to me; because one of the characters says things that are exactly like you."

"That's the lover, of course," said he.

"One of them," she said demurely. "It's the figurehead that comes to life. . . ."

"Oh! There's a figurehead that comes to life!"

"At first he's all painted up to look like an 1812 commodore, and then he turns out to be the *dearest* boy!"

"And he reminds you of me!"

"Most awfully. And we have the nicest scene together in the whole play, except maybe the last scene with the poor cabin-boy. . . ."

"Oh! there's a small boy in love with the heroine, too, is there? And does his love turn out to be about the best kind, after all?"

"Why, yes. But how do you know?"

"I don't. I thought it would be nice to have it that way."

"But you'll see it all for yourself this afternoon. We're going to run through the whole thing. You'll love the blind captain who never goes anywhere without his spy-glass. . . ."

"You are fond of this play, *aren't* you?"

"Just as if it was a nice, friendly, and very touching person. I'd cry my eyes out if anything happened to it! It's so honest and so kind. . . ."

His arm tightened again and he rubbed his cheek against hers.

"I guess nothing much will happen to it," he said, "except that it will be a tremendous hit, and everybody connected with it will be tremendously proud. Why, I dare say even I'll be proud of it!"

"I hope you'll be proud of me."

"Why, Silver, if you came on the stage and forgot all your lines, and couldn't act a bit, I'd still

be so proud of you that the chances are, ten to one, I'd burst with it. . . ."

"How's your poor, sick heel?"

"If it makes you feel the least bit of extra tenderness for me, it's going to be sick all the rest of my life."

XXXIII

ON the top floor of his father's home Sam Waring had a delightful room full of sunshine and books. It was not his sleeping-room, but a place in which he could be very private in the execution of good deeds. It was here that he tied up Christmas presents (with his own millionaire fingers) and wrote those painstaking, punctilious, and affectionate letters which his friends in all parts of the world were always so glad to get. And here, or rather in an attic adjoining, he had a carpenter's bench and a turning-lathe, and enough bright tools to build a house. He was always trying to make something, and abandoning each magnum opus in its early youth to begin something else.

He sat now with his back to the light, and a thick bundle of typewritten sheets on his knees. He seemed to have finished reading. The faces of his friends looked at him from all parts of the room, from wooden frames, and silver, and leather; even Silver Sands looked at him with half a dozen different expressions, from half a dozen advantageous situations, from half a dozen silver frames.

But he did not return any of her looks. He was studying affectionately the photograph (full length) of a very beautiful young woman, with a delicate, white hand laid caressingly on the head of a huge Russian wolfhound.

I was going to say that he had never seen her in his life. But that wouldn't be true. He had seen her often—many times a day from the first opening of his eyes till her sudden death six months later; but of course he couldn't remember. Nor could he remember any term of that astounding intimacy which had existed between them, that still more astounding understanding and affection.

But her milk was in his blood, and something of her kindness and graciousness was in his heart. And every day of his life he missed her. He missed her more especially on those occasions when he was unhappy, and had lost faith for a moment in the goodness of this world, and, as now, was troubled a little with bitterness and envy.

He tossed the manuscript of Henley's new play onto the blotter of the writing-table, rose and stretched himself. Then he had a closer look at his mother, then he had six different looks at Silver Sands. And to the picture of her which he liked the best (he always kept it for the last—like the raisins in a pudding) he added a few remarks:

"I'm *not* jealous of Paul," he said, "so there! And I'm glad *he* wrote it. And it doesn't make me a bit unhappy to realize that I can't write anything or be anything, except the commonest thing in God's world, a good business man. But I think Paul is a fool if he doesn't give Hedden a thrashing, and sue him for damages, and run off with you, and break your contract all to smithereens, and borrow all the money he needs from me. . . . So there!"

After that he recovered his collar and necktie from the writing-table, and while putting them on sang himself back into good humor with one of Paul's earliest literary efforts; the title to which was:

"A Horrible Thought Following a Beautiful." It went something like this:

> "'Tis beautiful to climb and cull
> Ripe fruit, and eat one's belly full.
> But oh, how horrible to be
> A schoolboy in a far countree!
> Adoring idols on his knees
> And learning Greek in Japanese."

And then he marched gayly out of the room, and down the stairs, keeping time with his feet, and singing at the top of his lungs still another of

Paul's early compositions, and one of even greater literary merit (if that is possible):

"I can have anything
That my father has got;
I have only to ask him
And specify what.
But the thing I most want,
Is a thing my mamma
When not using, keeps locked
By advice of papa.
It's the sewing-machine,
As you surely have guessed,
By which little children
Are tempted and dressed."

. . . . . .

He found Paul in the semidarkness, and slid quietly into the next seat.

"I've read it," he whispered, "and it's got even this show skinned to a frazzle. Have they begun?"

"Not yet. Hedden's been shooting off his mouth—for my benefit, I suppose. They are waiting while he writes a new opening speech."

"Struck from above with one of his sudden inspirations?"

"On which he's been laboring for a week. Yes."

McKay Hedden appeared on the stage and read the new lines with which he had been so suddenly

inspired; then about to give the stage over to the company, he perceived that a flower-pot (it would contain geraniums on the opening night) had been moved some three inches askew from the circle which he had chalked for it, and he seized the occasion to make first a row and then a speech.

He addressed the company, and the stage hands, and the carpenter, and the electrician, and Mrs. O'Mally, the wardrobe woman, who was very drunk indeed, upon the importance of detail. It was a very edifying speech. He even likened his position to that of a great general on the eve of a major engagement—and all of a sudden he apologized for his temper (Silver had just come on the stage to see what the row was about), attributing it to his nerves, to his insomnia, to the Herculean tasks which he accomplished every day, and to his many and heavy disappointments.

Waring and Henley were chuckling behind a pair of grave and courteous countenances.

But at last the rehearsal actually began, and Paul Henley leaning forward, chin on hands, began to check off mentally a long list of property that Hedden had stolen from him. Sometimes the stealing was very subtle; sometimes so barefaced that the young man wanted to rise in his place and denounce the criminal. . . . Then came Silver's

entrance, with that exquisitely spoken, "I'm *so* sorry" of hers; and his rage and indignation vanished like smoke. And he followed his love with delightful eyes and delighted ears.

For she shone in a new light and with new brightness. Could it be that he had never known her? It was as if in some jewel-box with whose pretty but humble contents he was well acquainted he had suddenly found a secret compartment containing the rarest and most ravishing pearls.

Could this be Silver Sands?—his Silver, the shy, the beseeching, the greedy eater of humble pie? This lithe and lovely creature now silent and motionless yet ubiquitous, and now exercising her God-given authority upon a man's laughter and his tears?

During one of Hedden's interruptions (he had a number of inspirations that afternoon) Henley whispered to Waring, his voice catching in the middle: "Is it because I'm in love with her that I—I think she's so wonderful?"

"Oh, no," said Waring, with a little shiver of self-pity, "she seems just as wonderful to me."

During the first entr'acte McKay Hedden crept upon them from behind like a ghost, and stood leaning on the back of Paul's seat and talked with them for a little while.

"Of course it's only a first act," he explained; "lots of machinery has to be set going. But Mr. Henley knows something about that. He's written plays himself."

"Written *at* them," Henley admitted. Hedden turned to Waring.

"I once had the misfortune of not being able to find an opening for one of Mr. Henley's plays; but he shouldn't be discouraged. If my memory serves me correctly it had its points."

"Oh," said Waring, "he's been and written another—much better."

Hedden's heart gave a sudden start. Why, of course, if the young man had the one play in him, he had others. It would have been better to have bought the first, to have given a little money and a little credit. By outrageously stealing it he had perhaps closed forever in his own face the door of a veritable treasure-vault.

"I hope," he said, "that I am going to see this new work?"

"I hope so, too," said Henley with a laugh; "I'll send you a box for the opening night."

"Ah!" said Hedden. "The curtain is going up," and he slipped away into the obscurity.

"Of all the cheek!" exclaimed Waring.

"Of all the ignorance!" exclaimed Henley.

"Sam, upon my honor, I don't believe that man *knows* that he's stolen my play. I think he'd feel terribly injured if such a thing were suggested."

Waring only grunted.

XXXIV

"WHAT do you propose to do about it, Paul?"

Silver had been detained by Hedden, and the young men were waiting for her at the stage door.

"I want to hurt Hedden," said Henley, "and I don't want to hurt Silver. . . . Are you sure about Hedden's calling for the mail the day after I left Hanleytown? The day Silver ought to have received the letter from me, that she never did receive?"

"Yes, I am sure," said Waring; "we can trust Silver to remember everything that happened on the day when she was expecting her first letter from you. It might be worth while to see my friend the Hanleytown postmaster. No letter goes out of his office without being thoroughly examined; no post-card without being read. It's a ten to one shot that if a letter passed through his hands addressed to Silver Sands, and having the New York Yacht Club ensign crossed with Van Brunt's private signal on the flap of the envelope, he would remember it."

"If Hedden took that letter and didn't give it to Silver," Henley began threateningly. "How can we get at the postmaster?"

"I'll send Dorking," said Waring simply. "He shall go to-night."

"Sure you can spare him?"

"How to spare them is the only thing I have ever learned about servants," said Waring.

Just then Silver, nestled among furs, for it had turned very cold, came swiftly out of the theatre.

"Say you liked it, Paul," she exclaimed. "Please say you liked it."

"I liked you," he smiled; "I like, and shall like you better every time I see you."

"But the play: I want you to like the play."

"I do. I love it."

"Then *that's* all right."

And she smiled upon them both in turn.

"Are you going to take us home and give us tea?"

She shook her head dismally.

"But Mabel will. Mr. Hedden has ordered me and the figurehead to his office to run through our part in the last act. He wants to make some change and he doesn't know just what."

"Don't forget that we're all dining together, and going to the movies."

"You told Mabel?"

"Miss Reeves said she would go with pleasure."

"Then *that's* all right."

She slipped into the taxi and, smiling back her broad, friendly smile at them, drove off.

"Now," said Henley, "it really does seem cold."

"And drafty," laughed Waring.

"And deserted. Makes me sick to think that Hedden has the right to order her about like that. No. . . . Let's walk. . . . If Hedden took that letter! . . ."

"Let's not think about that till Dorking comes back. It's such a rotten thing to think about any one—even about McKay Hedden. . . . By the way, Paul, what are you going to do about your new play?"

"I'm trying to think it out. I don't want to get in wrong this time."

"I hope that *this* time you've had more than one copy made."

"You bet I have."

"Then there's no hurry about returning the copy you loaned me."

"Not a bit."

"I'm glad. I've been worried ever since I got the thing, because I didn't have an envelope big enough to send it back in."

"What are you going to do between now and dressing time?"

"Aren't we on our way to Silver's to make Miss Reeves pour tea?"

"I'm not. I've got three letters to write. And I won't be happy till they're written."

A block or two farther the young men parted. Waring walked on irresolute. He was trying to decide whether he would get a real drink from a bartender, or tea from Miss Reeves. And the idea that Silver might return a minute or two before he had to go leaned the balance of his mind finally upon tea.

"There's nobody here but me," said Miss Reeves.

"I know that. I've just left them. Silver said you were here, and could be persuaded to pour tea."

Miss Reeves gave the necessary orders. She was a little flustered by Waring's call. It was a long time since she had had him all to herself, except for moments and then by accident. Now he seemed to have sought her out, knowing that she would be alone, and the thought made her very happy.

"You know Silver pretty well," Waring began.

"I'm beginning to. But where there's so much

sweetness and kindness, you can't find it out all at once."

"Do you remember once I told you a great secret about some mutual friends?"

She nodded.

"You never said a word, and you helped to set the matter right. The nicest thing in this world is a girl you can trust not to talk."

"Are you leading up to another great secret, Sam?"

"Yes. This play that you are in—you and Silver, although in many ways McKay Hedden's work, is actually stolen, all the soul and a lot of the body, from a play written by another man."

"Just so Hedden has written all his plays."

"To the real author he proposes to give neither money nor credit. That's a shame."

"Why doesn't the real author do something, then?"

"He's in a difficult position. . . . The play and her probable success in it mean so much to Silver. . . . You see, Paul really wrote the play."

Tea was brought, and after the maid had gone, Miss Reeves turned steady, inquiring eyes upon Waring.

"Truly?"

"A jury might not see the truth. But there's

no doubt at all. Of course Paul is furious. But he won't do anything that might make Silver uncomfortable."

"If she knew Paul had written it, and wasn't getting his deserts, she'd refuse to act in it, naturally; and that would just about break her heart. She loves the play as if it was a person. Is that the idea?"

"In a nutshell of very small capacity."

She smiled in a queer, hurt way.

"What's the matter, Mabel?"

"Matter? Why, that nobody seems to worry about how *I* might feel at acting in a play that had been stolen from a good friend. But everybody worries about Silver."

"Of course," said Waring, "it's only natural that Paul should only think of Silver; but I ought not to have been so stupid."

"Why *oughtn't* you, Sam? If Paul thinks only of Silver, why shouldn't you?"

Perceiving that his fancied secret was perfectly well known to his old friend, Waring made no evasion.

"He has the right to think only of Silver, Mabel. I haven't."

XXXV

"WHAT are you going to do about it?" Miss Reeves asked him after a short pause.

"Oh," said he, "stay around till I find that I can't be of any use to them; and then go away somewhere and get very busy about something else, and forget about it."

"It isn't always easy to forget about things that matter."

"No; when you get up with the one thought and carry it about all day, and go to bed with it, it's not easy. But if you want something to happen, and it's absolutely out of the question that it should happen, why you've just got to get over wanting, that's all."

"When you first met Silver, she ought to have told you that she was engaged to Paul."

"Why, bless her," said Waring; "it never occurred to her that she was dangerous to the peace and happiness of every young man she met."

"I don't believe it ever did."

And for the next half-hour they exchanged praises of Silver. It may have been a trying ex-

perience for Mabel Reeves; at the same time it brought her closer to Waring's mind and habits of thought, and deeper into his confidence than she had ever been before.

Neither of them drank any tea at all. And when Sam rose to go he was more at peace with the world than he had been for a long time.

"It's splendid," he said, holding out his hand, "to talk to a girl that understands. I feel ever so much more courageous, thanks to you. But I'm afraid I've bored you with my troubles."

"You couldn't bore me, Sam. I hope you know that."

"Then I'll come again," said Sam smiling, "to weep on your shoulder. You will have to have a special dress made of rough towelling. I'm one of the wettest weepers. . . ."

"All right," she said with a laugh. And she had really spoken with complete sincerity. It would have given her immense pleasure to have had him put his head on her shoulder, and cry—or laugh.

When he had gone she went to the nearest mirror and looked at herself. Because she had had a hard life she had formed the habit of thinking of herself as old. As a matter of fact, she was only a few years older than Silver. Her hair grew as

strongly and brightly, and sometimes, as when she was with Waring, she vied with her in coloring.

"I'm not in Silver's class," she thought, "but I've been in love longer than she has, and that's something."

Sam met Silver just coming in from the street. It gave her pleasure to learn that he had been with Mabel, and she smiled bewitchingly and with a certain mischief. "If I can only make it happen," she thought.

"I suppose it's Hedden's fault," Sam reproached her; "but you're going to be late. And it's the first film in the new movies that I 'specially want you to see."

"Sam," said Silver, "I'll hurry." And she crossed her heart.

He put her into the elevator and stood bareheaded until she had vanished upward. And then he left the building hurriedly; but he could not have felt as unhappy as he usually did, for once in the cold air of the street he began to whistle "Haste to the Wedding," which is, as everybody knows, about the liveliest and most engaging tune that ever came out of Ireland.

"How did the scene go?" asked Miss Reeves.

"It didn't go," said Silver. "The figurehead never came."

"Hedden must have been furious."

Silver did not at once answer. Then she said: "Hedden wasn't angry. But he made me wait and wait, and"—her voice became plaintive—"just because a girl is in a man's pay, I don't think he has any right to order her about, and——"

Sudden tears came into her eyes.

"Why, what happened, Silver?"

"Oh, nothing. . . . But I don't think he'd even told the figurehead to come. And finally when I wouldn't wait any more and was coming away, the elevator boy whispered something to the janitor, and they both—laughed."

"If Hedden ordered me to his rooms," said Miss Reeves, "I simply wouldn't go."

"I won't," said Silver. "Not again."

Having dressed, Waring hurried to the restaurant where he had ordered dinner. Here he found Paul Henley waiting for him.

Henley came forward with a reproachful smile. He had not yet checked his coat. Waring noticed that it was lined with sable—remembered—and burst out laughing.

"It's no laughing matter," said Henley. "I can't possibly live up to it. . . . But I like it so much that I refuse to take it off. I'm going to wear it to dinner. . . . As for the pearl, Sam,

nobody can afford to give anybody a thing like that. . . . I've put it in the hotel safe, and tomorrow I'll take it back to the jeweller's. . . ."

"No you don't," said Waring; "you told me a friend could give a friend anything except a wife. . . ."

"I know, but . . ."

"If we stop quarrelling, there's time to drink a cocktail before the ladies arrive. And if we don't, there isn't."

"Oh," said Henley, "if you're going to make a *serious* issue out of it, why I'll keep the pearl . . . and the automobile too. Can't I even wear my new coat into the café?"

"No, you can't. You check it in the coat room."

"But it's so new and sably and all," he protested; "somebody is sure to steal it!"

They leaned upon the bar waiting for their cocktail.

"Sam," said Henley

"What?"

"What a brick you are!"

"Get out!" said Waring, with emotion.

XXXVI

"THE postmaster remembers the letter very well, Paul."

Waring had just found his friend in the library of the Tennis Club. There was a notice in evidence that members were requested not to talk, but the room being unoccupied except by themselves, there seemed no good reason for complying with the request.

"And Hedden?"

"He took it with the rest of the Sands family mail, and Silver never got it."

Henley could not find words to express his anger. But Sam smiled a little cynically.

"All things are supposed to be fair," he said, "in love and war."

"You don't think?"

"In a way, yes. I think he is. I think he would marry Silver to-morrow if she would have him."

Henley thought this over for a moment and the tense expression of his face relaxed gradually.

"Of course," he said, "a man like that hasn't the slightest idea how decent people behave either in love or war. But if he really cares for Silver,

I'm sorry for him. Why," he cried with enthusiasm, "it must be simply awful to care for her and feel you haven't a ghost of a show."

Waring appeared to be interested in a prize-fighting print which hung on the wall just above Henley's head. As a matter of fact, he wasn't in the least interested in it.

"I should say it must be!" he exclaimed sympathetically.

"Why," continued Henley, "if I thought she wasn't going to belong to me I wouldn't want to live."

"Really?"

"Really."

"But you *would* live and you'd end by reconciling yourself to life and enjoying it, much as usual."

"A lot you know about it! You've never been in love."

"Sometimes," said Waring, "when I consider how many other sides there are to life I am inclined to agree with you. And now about all this mix-up with Hedden. . . . Sometimes I think you are wrong to think so much about Silver's feelings. Why not tell her the whole story? Between us, perhaps we can persuade Hedden to give you the proper acknowledgments and royalties. . . .

Then when the play has run its course, Silver can retire from the stage. . . . Meanwhile we'll find a producer for your new play."

"Hedden, you know," Henley interrupted, "has got Silver on a five-year contract."

"I didn't know. That's bad."

"And of course he's got to be thrashed for that letter business. Are we *sure* he took the letter?"

Remembering the Hanleytown postmaster, Waring smiled, and said: "We are."

"Suppose I have a talk with Hedden and . . ."

"You *can't* fight with him, Paul."

"Oh, but it wouldn't be a fight."

"You know what I mean."

"I know this: that before anything is straightened out I'll be packed off to Mexico."

Waring shook his head.

"Van gave me the chance out of the goodness of his heart; and I've got to make good if it's in me. It was mighty white of him to let me come away for a vacation; but I ought not to have done it."

"You left a good man in charge."

"A better man than I am; but it's my job. . . . Van . . ."

"Van is no longer interested in the Lost Mines. He has sold out his interest."

"I'll be hanged! When? . . ."

"Recently."

"And what," exclaimed Henley, "has he done with the quarter interest that was to have been mine, if I made good?"

"The purchaser considers that you *have* made good. It's come out, Paul, that you and your men fought a three days' battle with the Federalists. How about that? And that as a result they moved their operations farther east."

Henley was blushing hotly.

"But . . ." he protested.

"The country in which the Lost Mines are situated is now in the hands of the rebels."

"Between the rebels and the Federalists there is absolutely no difference when it comes to loot!"

"In this case there is. The rebel general—who will be the next President of Mexico, has given my father personal assurances that the Lost Mines will be protected."

"But——"

"That may not satisfy you, my boy, but it satisfies my father."

"He's bought 'em?"

Waring nodded.

"All but your quarter interest. He will either buy that at the same price per share that he bought Van's interest, or you can hold it."

"But I haven't earned——"

"It boils down to this; did the presence of you and your men prevent the destruction of the plant or didn't it?"

Henley was silent. He looked very much ashamed of himself. He didn't wish to boast, and he didn't propose to lie. He remembered shooting a rifle for so many hours that he was absolutely sick from the recoil and the jar. And he could not deny that it was he who had sprinkled the slope up which the Federals must advance with cans of dynamite and had directed his men to fire not at the Federals but at the dynamite. . . . No, of course he hadn't *earned* his interest in the Lost Mines, but he had made a beginning, so he blushed and looked ashamed.

"There's not an earthly thing for you to do in Mexico now, Paul. You saved the property when it was in danger. And now it isn't any more, and won't be."

"And on whose advice," cried Henley, "did your father make this sudden purchase?"

It was Sam's turn to blush and look ashamed.

Henley was very much moved.

"I only advised him," said Sam presently, "to look into the proposition. This he did with his usual care, and it looked good to him, that's all.

And besides—" here he smiled upon his friend with great affection, "all's fair in love and war."

"By God," exclaimed Henley, "you do love your friends, don't you!"

"Whom else would you have me love, Paul?"

XXXVII

WHEN Mr. Crawley had said that it was his sole ambition to retire from active participation in theatrical affairs, he had not stated the whole truth. In short, he wished to retire; but not alone. That was why, the ink scarce dry upon it, he laid the check which he had extorted from McKay Hedden, face up upon a typewriting table that was just under a very pretty nose and a pair of steadfast, green eyes.

The eyes noted the amount for which the check was drawn, noted the date upon which it would mature, and then looked up from the check until they had left in a state of inviting unprotectedness a very pretty mouth, which disclosed a hint of very pretty teeth.

Mr. Crawley never said a word. And a certain look of manliness which you would never have suspected him of possessing crept into his face as he bent tenderly and kissed her.

"It's a fresh start," he said then, "in the country."

"But," she exclaimed, "what made him do it? Has the sky fallen down?"

Miss Eva Carley examined the check once more, and said:

"Two months from to-day."

"It's a long time to wait, dear. Couldn't we discount this check? We wouldn't have to tell anybody that we were married?"

She considered this for some moments, and then once more tilted her face upward.

"To-day?"

His voice shook with a great shaking.

"All right."

"Now?" He could hardly articulate.

She laughed:

"Instead of lunch? No. After the office closes. You haven't lost our license?"

"It's crumpled, because I put it under my pillow every night; but it's good."

She rose, put on her hat and coat, and they went out. As they ate lunch at the little basement café just around the corner, she reverted once more to Hedden's check, and Crawley told her just how he had obtained it.

Her honest face became more and more troubled. At last she shook her pretty head, and said: "That kind of money is no good . . . you *frightened* him into giving it to you. . . ."

Mr. Crawley hung his head.

"I want my husband to be the squarest man in the world." she said.

If it had not been withheld from so doing by his neck, Mr. Crawley's head must have rolled down his body to the floor. "Then," he said finally in a dim voice, "you don't want *me* for a husband."

Her eyes swam with love and trouble.

"You've got it *in* you to be square," she said radiantly, "and I love you."

Somebody at a near-by table must have overheard this, because there was a subdued titter followed by a kissing noise. Mr. Crawley paid the score, and the young couple left the restaurant with considerable haughtiness.

"When I'm with you," said the young man, "I'm square. I feel square. But before I met you I'd taken such a bad start that this—this is the result."

"Well," said she, "tell me everything there is to tell."

"You won't have any more use for me."

"Why not? I love you. And I want to be married to you, and mean to be—after confession and expiation."

As they walked along, Crawley spread out for her to examine the shabby, dusty fabric of his life; how he had fought against the first meanness that

Hedden had required of him, and after had fought less and less, until it had become his second nature to do what he was told, no matter what it was. He told her dozens of unsavory incidents; the story of Paul Henley's play and others like it, culminating with the turning upon Hedden and using his evil knowledge of him to extract a large sum of money.

"But I wouldn't have done that," he pleaded, "if I hadn't been just blind to the wrongness of it by wanting you so much."

"You'll give it back to him, of course."

He nodded, but without enthusiasm. It is pleasant to reform. But ten thousand dollars are as surely ten thousand dollars as apples are apples.

"And you must tell Mr. Henley about the play, and your part in—in——"

"Yes," he said hastily.

"That play," she said, "must be stopped unless Mr. Hedden does the right thing by the author."

"But how about us, and our orchard?"

"You'll get a job with some one else, and so'll I, and we'll pool our savings."

"Two," pleaded Mr. Crawley, "can live as cheap as one——"

"Anyway they can try," she said stoutly; "and when you've given back the check, and told Mr. Henley about the play, they *will* try."

Silence for a block.

"I wish I had the gift of language," said Mr. Crawley, "to go on top of the Woolworth building and tell all the world the kind of girl you are."

"The world," said Miss Carley, "would be bored stiff."

They reached the offices of the McKay Hedden Theatre Company, and, having taken leave of each other in a secluded spot, Mr. Crawley ascended to his master's private suite.

He gave the check into his master's hands and said:

"Thank you very much, but it isn't good enough —the way I got it—and I'd like to resign if you please, when my month is up."

Without another word, Mr. Crawley turned his back (almost straight, for a wonder) and marched out of the room. And he, who but a moment before had been a rich man for his age and station in life, and who was now very poor indeed, felt in his breast a strong warm feeling, as of courage being kindled therein, and hope and self-respect.

He peeped into the office where Miss Carley worked with three other girls, on the chance that these three others might not yet have returned from lunch. Unfortunately one of them had re-

turned, and he was obliged to postpone the kiss that he had promised himself.

But in nodding to her and smiling through the crack in the door, and thus announcing that the check had been returned, he took a certain comfort.

Mr. Hedden, having torn the check into minute pieces, remarked to himself:

"There's something back of this."

XXXVIII

AFTER hours, having by much subtle telephoning discovered the name of the hotel at which Mr. Henley was stopping, Mr. Crawley called upon that gentleman and learned that he was out.

He lingered about the hotel office for an hour, and while he lingered a messenger boy entered and gave the girl in charge of the books and magazines a large package.

Mr. Crawley watched her open it. It appeared to contain only a large piece of white bristol-board, with a brass ring to hang it by. But this white board had printing upon the other side, as Mr. Crawley perceived when the girl hung it against the back wall of the book-stall by passing the brass ring over a brass hook. The printing was like this.

First in enormous type the name

McKAY HEDDEN

in small type — presents

a good sized type — SILVER SANDS

in

a better sized type — His New Play

once more enormous — WHEN MY SHIP COMES IN

"Good God," exclaimed Mr. Crawley, "I hadn't realized that we opened to-morrow night!"

And he continued for a long time to loiter nervously about this office, remarking to himself now and then: "Only twenty-four hours in which to get justice done."

He felt as you might feel if you were bearing a reprieve to a man about to be hanged for a crime he had not committed, and got stuck in a snowdrift.

Two hours had passed, and Mr. Henley had not come in. Mr. Crawley ate a little something with a glass of beer in the barroom. Another hour passed and no Henley. It never occurred to him that the man he sought was undoubtedly attending the dress rehearsal of the play in which the girl he loved was to star. . . .

At about midnight, Silver Sands and Mabel Reeves stepped out of the elevator, and entered their apartment. A man literally sprang at them. Neither of them screamed.

"Oh, Miss Sands, I've got to see you," he cried. "I waited and waited for Mr. Henley, but he never came, and it's urgent, very urgent. Indeed it is."

"Why," said Silver, "it's Mr. Crawley."

"*I'll* say good night," said Miss Reeves, still startled, but smiling.

"Yes, please," ejaculated Mr. Crawley nervously. And he followed Silver Sands into the living-room.

"Why did you want to see Mr. Henley so particularly?" she called anxiously.

"Because he's being robbed and hoodwinked," said Mr. Crawley. "And I couldn't find him to tell him—so I've come to you. *You* wouldn't want to see him robbed, would you, Miss Sands?"

"Certainly not."

"Have you seen the bills of 'When My Ship Comes In'?"

She nodded.

"They say it's by him, Miss Sands; but it isn't."

"Who says it's by whom?"

"The bills—the bills say McKay Hedden wrote the play; but he didn't. He stole it."

"*Stole* it? What makes you think that?"

"Because I made a copy for him of the play he stole it from. . . ."

"And that play was written by Mr. Henley?"

"Then you know?"

"No. I just guessed. I don't know how or why. I think it'd been dawning on me for a long time that something was wrong somewhere. Sit down, Mr. Crawley, and tell me all about everything."

And as the saying is, Mr. Crawley did just that and more too.

"And you'll tell Mr. Henley first thing in the morning, so's he can get an injunction or something."

"Wouldn't it be fairest to go to Mr. Hedden first? He's been a good friend to me. . . ."

Mr. Crawley made a gesture of despair.

"Hasn't he?"

"Oh, maybe he has, Miss Sands; maybe he has."

"Well, I *think* he has. And so it will be fair to go to him and to tell him what you have said, and see what he has to say."

"Don't you believe me, Miss Sands?"

"Well," she said gently, "Mr. Henley has seen several rehearsals, and he hasn't said anything about any of the ideas being taken from him."

"I know that," said Mr. Crawley, "and yet I'm telling you God's truth, Miss Sands."

"But it's curious that Mr. Henley shouldn't have said anything."

For some moments Mr. Crawley could not think of any explanation. At last he said: "I haven't always told the truth, Miss Sands, but this time I am telling it."

And then because he was in love himself an ex-

planation of Henley's conduct flashed into his mind. His face brightened, and he cried:

"I know why he hasn't spoken. I know now. It's because he doesn't want you to be unhappy or disappointed. He's sacrificing his interests and everything so that—so that you can have your doll and play with it. Why, that's too easy. It's just what any real man would do for the girl he loved."

And during this utterance Mr. Crawley himself actually looked like a real man; so that Silver, though in great mental perturbation and distress, managed to smile a little mischievously and to say:

"I think you must be in love yourself, Mr. Crawley."

"I am," cried the young man; "indeed I am. And I wish I could do for her what he's doing for you."

"It's splendid to be in love!" said Silver.

"It is splendid, Miss Sands. It's like standing on the top of a mountain with your hat off and a gale of wind blowing through your hair."

"Now," said Silver Sands, "I believe you, Mr. Crawley. But I must give Mr. Hedden a chance to say what he has to say. Don't you think that's the square thing to do?"

"I think that that is what *she'd* do," said Mr. Crawley; "so it must be right."

She held out her hand to him.

"Thank you, Mr. Crawley. Give the young lady my love. And good night."

"I hope you're not going to take this too much to heart, Miss Sands."

"Oh, no," she said. "Good night, Mr. Crawley."

She went with him to the door of the apartment, and showed him out.

"Thank you again. And don't worry if the elevator doesn't start the moment you ring. The boy is probably asleep again. He was when we came in."

"Then I'll walk and not disturb him," said Mr. Crawley. "Good night."

"Can I come in, Mabel?"

Miss Reeves, eager to hear the news, had not even made a beginning of undressing.

"It seems," said Silver, "that 'When My Ship Comes In' is really Paul's property."

"Well," said Miss Reeves, "I'm glad some one has told you at last!"

"You knew?"

Miss Reeves nodded.

"But I promised not to tell. It's a rotten business all around. What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to give Mr. Hedden a chance to do

right, and if he won't—but he will surely—why, of course I won't act in the thing—and—and I'm so disappointed and tired I could cry."

Which she forthwith did in Miss Reeves's arms and on her shoulder, and at great length.

"Silver," said this one after a while; "you've got Paul, anyway, and people to take care of you."

"I know, but—but——"

"If the play is called off," said Miss Reeves, "some people will be out of a job—people who haven't any lover to turn to——"

"Oh, what a beast I am," moaned Silver; "just a miserable, thoughtless beast. Of course, I've got to act in the thing."

"No," said Miss Reeves, "you must do what's right—no matter who is hurt."

"Oh," said Silver, "the heart's all gone out of the thing now—it's all gone—that was so full of joy and heart. . . ."

An hour later she was sound asleep, and to look at her you would have thought that she had never had a sorrow in her life.

It was Mabel Reeves who did not sleep a wink that night, and who would have spent the whole of it in tears if she had been one of those to whom the good things of this life come easily—love, and success, and laughter, and tears.

XXXIX

IT is remarkable how people lying awake, their minds preternaturally active, come to no conclusion upon a given difficulty: while people sleeping soundly, through the same period of time, will change their minds completely for better or worse and, rising, begin a way out of their troubles or deeper into them.

Silver woke calm and refreshed; for, right or wrong, she had determined upon a course of action. To a question put by Mabel Reeves, she answered: "I can't tell you anything until I've talked with Hedden. The first thing to do is to give him a chance to square himself."

"And if he can't?"

"I think I know what to do."

"And if he can?"

"Why then all's well, isn't it?"

She departed, smiling, like a very young sphinx, and twenty minutes later met Hedden, by appointment, at his office.

The man was sitting with his face between his hands, contemplating a solitary white rosebud in a narrow bronze vase. He literally appeared to

wrench himself from this agreeable occupation; and for a moment he looked dazed and surprised, as if, in spite of their appointment to meet at that precise moment, Silver Sands was the last person in the world he expected to see. Slowly, and it must be confessed rather winningly, the surprise in his face yielded first to pleasure and then to rapture.

"Oh, Silver!" he exclaimed. "I have been dreaming. If *only* things could be different. I have been dreaming that at the last curtain call, you and I come together and tell the audience that we are engaged to be married. . . . We have been through a great deal together, Silver; we have built up this play from nothing to what it is now. You and I are alone responsible. It seems flying in the face of dramatic justice if things are to go no further with us. But I won't say any more. . . . After to-night, when you have made your great hit with the public, you will soon see for yourself how impossible it would be for you to marry any one not connected with the stage."

"But I am thinking of leaving the stage before to-night," said Silver simply and earnestly.

McKay Hedden looked at her in a dazed sort of way. Then he reached for his desk calendar, consulted it, and shook his head with inquiring energy.

"No," he said, "it's *not* the first of April."

Silver said nothing further until Hedden had quite finished with the calendar. Then she said: "I'm terribly unhappy and disappointed."

"Now look here," said Hedden, "you are more than half in earnest. Tell me everything from the beginning."

"But you know everything from the beginning better than I do," she said. "The important thing that you haven't known is that I know, too!"

He smiled amiably, and shook his head.

"A phrase like that, Silver, is worth good money for purposes of mystification. For the benefit of a mediocre understanding couldn't you, as a personal favor, couch the idea in words of two syllables?"

"Very well," said Silver, and she asked point-blank: "Why shouldn't Mr. Henley's name be on the programme to-night, instead of yours?"

The manager had a rare control of his facial muscles. His lawyers boasted of his gifts as a witness.

"Why should it?" he asked blandly. "Just because a girl fancies herself in love with a man is no reason for ascribing to him the authorship of the play in which she is to appear, is it?"

"Why, no," said Silver. "Not even a ghost of a reason. If a man produces another man's play,

"No," he said, "it's *not* the first of April"

surely there's reason for putting the other man's name on the programme, and paying him the royalties that he deserves, isn't there?"

"Would you mind coming over here to the window a moment?"

She followed him somewhat puzzled.

A panel in one of the stained-glass windows stood wide open, and through this the light of day came and fell full on Silver's face. His eyes puckered. Hedden studied that lovely face gravely and then drew a long sigh of relief.

"My dear child," he said. "I thought you had gone crazy with excitement and worry. But your eyes are perfectly sane and—" here he laid his hand on his heart "perfectly beautiful."

"Mr. Hedden," she said, "if Paul Henley had never been born, would you ever have produced a play like 'When My Ship Comes In'?"

"Of course," he said simply.

"It's the hardest thing in the world not to believe you," said Silver. "You've seemed to be so good to me, and all, and yet——"

"But the play was written in your father's house, you were there all the time. You saw it develop from the first germs——"

"That's it," said Silver. "The first germs! Where did *they* come from?"

"Why, some from one place, some from another," said Hedden; "and though men say there is no new thing under the sun, some of them are new."

"And a play which Mr. Henley once sent you supplied none of them?"

"How should I know?" said Hedden disarmingly. "Every jot of a man's experience, his readings, his talks with other men go into the filling of that vast and complex storehouse from which he draws his ideas and his inventions. I read a play *once* by Mr. Henley," he shrugged his shoulders pointedly. "It is one of my managerial duties to read all plays that are submitted to me. I read this play then, and sent it back to him."

"Wasn't it any good?"

"I told you once that I would never say anything derogatory to a rival. And now I tell you so again."

"It was pretty bad?"

Hedden merely smiled.

"Then why," said Silver, "did you have a copy of it made before you returned it? Why did you?"

"Once," said Hedden glibly, "a man sent me a play. I returned it to him and he claimed that he never received it and demanded damages.

Since that experience I have had a copy made of every play that comes into this office—merely to guard myself against annoyance."

"Then you could show me the copy of Mr. Henley's play?"

"No. Because directly I learn that an author has received his original I have the copy destroyed. It has never been a passion of mine to collect trash."

"And you don't consciously owe anything to Mr. Henley's play?"

"My dear child!"

Silver Sands shrugged her shoulders a hair's-breadth and turned toward the door.

"I hope you believe me, Silver."

She faced him once more.

"If the play's a failure," she said, "it won't matter one way or the other."

"Silver! On a mere suspicion, don't tell me that you are going to *make* the play fail! For its failure or its success are in your hands!"

"Oh, Mr. Hedden," she exclaimed, "it isn't a mere suspicion!"

"Mr. Henley has seen a rehearsal of the piece. If he has any complaint to make why doesn't he come forward and make it like a man? . . . But perhaps he has to *you*."

The color deepened in Silver's cheeks.

"He hasn't complained because he doesn't want to spoil my fun."

"He seems to have explained his attitude very clearly, at least."

"Oh, no," said Silver. "One just puts two and two together, and guesses why he hasn't complained. But it will be different when I tell him that I know already."

"But you don't know."

She made no comment.

"You can't know. Did you ever read the play which you accuse me of having *stolen?* Did you?"

"No."

"And just because a miserable little blackmailer in my office runs to you with a tale of woe, you believe that I am a crook."

Again Silver made no comment.

"Are you," he went on, "willing to put your accusation in writing, to sign it and give it to the papers? Do you know that if you couldn't prove what you allege you would be guilty of slander? Can you prove it?"

"Why—" began Silver.

"Not to your own satisfaction," said Hedden quickly, "but to a jury—to a *jury?* What is the

case? Crawley's word against mine. Can you even produce Mr. Henley's original play? . . . My dear Silver, you are doing a foolish thing. Believe me, I know all there is to know about plagiarism. Suppose I *had* written a play upon the same plot as Mr. Henley's; had indeed deliberately done so—still the two pieces would be as different as light and darkness; the one suited to the waste-paper basket, the other to the stage. *Who* accuses Shakespeare of plagiarism? Yet not one of his plots was original with him, except that of 'Much Ado About Nothing,' which has no plot. And in this case, I give you my word of honor . . ."

"I can't follow arguments very well," said Silver quietly. "But I've given you a chance to square yourself, and somehow you haven't done it."

"You will end by angering me."

"Why do you *want* the credit of a thing that isn't yours?"

"But it *is* mine! And it's the best that I have done. That is why I am jealous of my credit. But, by the great jumping Judas! I didn't think you would turn against me. And I tell you, Silver, if you weren't you, I'd throw you over, for treating me like this. The play is *mine*, I tell you. Mine."

"Couldn't we send for Mr. Crawley and Mr. Henley and hear what they have to say?"

McKay Hedden began to rake his hair upward with his long fingers.

"My God!" he cried. "But this child is obstinate. Yes! Send for them, send for them! But not here. Bring them into court with their lawyers and their indictment. . . . Look here, Silver: Suppose just for the sake of argument that you are doing me an injustice. Suppose just for the sake of argument you found out that Crawley had lied to you. How, my dear child, would you square yourself with me? Remember, I have offered you my word of honor, and you have refused to accept it. If it should suddenly dawn on you that the truth *is* in me and not in the other, how will you square yourself—not with me, my dear, that is too easy, but with your own conscience?"

Silver's eyes began to fill with tears.

"I don't understand law and arguments and things," she said, "but somehow, Mr. Hedden, I just know that I'm right about this——"

"You are hurting me very cruelly, Silver."

"We are all being hurt. But we have to do right when we think we know how."

"May I ask just what your idea of *right* is, under the circumstances?"

"Why, I can't act in a play that is robbing a man of what belongs to him, so——"

"You want to break your contract?"

"Yes."

"It will throw a lot of deserving people out of work."

"You can find something else for them to do."

"In half a day? I'm no magician."

"What do I have to do to break my contract?"

"There are two ways. You either beg the other party to the contract to let you off or you just break it and then sit around and see what happens to you!"

There was a veiled threat in his voice.

"Then I just beg you to let me off."

He sighed and walked away from her and back to her several times, debating in his mind which of the many high cards he held should be played next.

"I shouldn't consider letting you off," he said at length, "except that of late I have begun to lose confidence in 'When My Ship Comes In.' And I have begun to think that I have been hypnotized by your beauty and charm into the belief that, absolutely without experience, you could be starred on Broadway. But that is against reason and experience."

This new turn not only bewildered Silver but

hurt her pride, and set her up in arms. Utterly without conceit or boastfulness, she had learned through the long weeks of rehearsal to know her power over laughter and tears.

"I have been terribly anxious," he went on, "and in a sense it would be a relief to take the piece off."

"You've never confessed any doubts before."

"If a leader confesses that he is afraid, where will you find courage?"

"And all your enthusiasm has been just acting!"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I am afraid," he said, "the part is a little big and complex for you, after all, Silver. It's not an easy part. And still, feeling this way—I've gone on and on, deeper and deeper, spending more and more money to insure against failure. Why? Because I said, 'She is trying so hard, she deserves this chance. And if the play fails it won't be because she didn't at least try with all her heart and soul.' But now—she isn't even going to try."

He smiled in her face.

"You've been expensive, Silver. You've cost me a broken heart, and altogether too many thousands of dollars to mention in polite society. . . . Of course, with you trying your level best the play still has a chance!"

He tossed his hands in a gesture of abandonment.

"If you were a man," he said, "it would occur to you to try and make good with the play. Grant for the sake of argument that it isn't my play; still I am the one who is taking all the risks, and putting up all the money. It would take a long, successful run to make me square with the game. But I am to be thrown over, and my money—not that that matters—burned alive by the thousand, because you think I am trying to cheat some one. For the play to be profitable it must have a phenomenal run, Silver. It must be a genuine success even for me to come out even. Which is worse, for a man to take an idea from another man, supposing that I had, or for a girl to take a small fortune from a man who has trusted her and believed in her and made sacrifices for her?"

Silver had done no thinking along these lines.

"Suppose," said Hedden, "that you first square the game, Silver, and then talk about *breaking* your contract? But there is no time to lose, you must come to some decision at once."

Curiously enough, the thing uppermost in her mind was the knowledge that Hedden doubted her ability to make the play succeed. So much of the poison of Broadway she had absorbed in her short

contact with the stage. And it seemed more necessary to show him that she could than to see justice done.

"The curtain," said Hedden, "either goes up to-night at 8.15 or it doesn't. I am willing to waive what I have sunk personally in the production. But the company, of course, will expect to be reimbursed for whatever your sudden fit of nerves will have cost them to date, in addition to such advances as they have made to your personal account. When you have paid the company what you owe them, they will undoubtedly be willing to cancel your contract——"

Silver burst suddenly into tears. "You see," said Hedden, "you are trying to do what you think is right, but you have only thought of a few of the trifles which complicate the situation. Come now, what are you going to do? Are you going to throw us over and take the consequences, or are you going to pay back into the treasury such sums as have been advanced to you and get the company to let you off?"

"I will pay back every penny," said Silver, "if only you will give me time. I can get another engagement . . . why couldn't I?"

"Because," said Hedden, who had interrupted her with a short, ugly laugh, "no manager would

give you a contract after hearing how you've respected the one you have with us. I doubt if you could even get a job in a chorus. And besides, you have as yet no reputation—no record. You'll have to think of some other way of earning money."

"Oh," she cried. "It's like being buried alive! I'm helpless. I can't move in any direction."

He nodded with cynicism. And suddenly she laid her hands on his shoulders and looked him appealingly in the face.

"I *can't* do right, can I?" she said. "Because I'm all caught and tied and involved; so that any right I do, makes something else wrong. But you are free. You are great and powerful. You can do anything you please. You can even do right if you want to. Won't you do right? Won't you, Mr. Hedden? If you will do right, I—I will—I will *make* the play go. I can do that. I know I can do that. So won't you? Won't you, Mr. Hedden?"

So great was the appeal in her voice, and so moving the fire and pathos in the great eyes turned upward to his, that for a moment McKay Hedden was almost stampeded from his position. It was on the tip of his tongue to confess his plagiarism, and to offer every reparation in his power. But

the impulse to confession brought the image of Henley into his mind's eye, and a sudden passion of jealousy blazed up in him, so that instead of confession and restitution there burst from him: "Silver. I want you so! I want you so!"

And he tried to take her in his arms. Silver, however, stepped backward so swiftly that he embraced only the empty air. And here the man did a thing that was very characteristic of him. Instead of stopping in mid-gesture and looking utterly fooled and foolish, he carried his sweeping arms onward until they met, until they passed each other, and until they lay superbly crossed upon his chest.

Silver continued to retreat until her hand rested on the knob of the door by which she had entered.

"I will let you know about to-night," she said, "as soon as I have talked with Mr. Henley. I shall ask him what I ought to do, and he will tell me."

McKay Hedden laughed a short, ugly laugh.

"The curtain," he said, "will go up at 8.15, and if you're not on hand to do your best, Silver, all I can say is: I'm sorry for you."

XL

MCKAY HEDDEN tried again and again during the course of the day to communicate with Silver. For all his bluster he was badly frightened. It was not difficult to bully a woman and get the better of her—face to face; but left to themselves he had small faith in the sex. Was she simply going to disappear until the time for raising the curtain on "When My Ship Comes In" had come and gone? Or were she and Henley perhaps busy getting out an injunction restraining him from producing the piece at all?

"But she can't throw me over like that," he told himself a hundred times. "If she wasn't going to appear she'd let me know definitely in time to do something about it."

This, however, was not perfect comfort. He lashed himself into a fury. He threatened and stormed. He also became limp and weak from sheer nervousness and self-pity. And toward dusk such was his state of mind that to be spared any further worry he was even ready to eat humble-pie and do justice.

At seven o'clock he stood just within the stage

door of his theatre watching the street. He had already prepared a statement for the papers, saying that the performance had been indefinitely postponed owing to the sudden illness of Miss Sands; and he had also prepared a little speech of explanation which he himself should deliver to a disgruntled audience. He may be compared to a bridegroom waiting at the altar for the bride that does not come. He was possessed in turn by rage, jealousy, or panic, and sometimes by all the three at once.

It had been Silver's plan on leaving Hedden's office to go straight to Henley and tell him the whole story and abide by his advice. But even while she was telephoning to him from the nearest public booth, and saying she must see him at once, a new light dawned for her, and she had changed her mind, not about seeing him but about telling him.

They met at a certain flower store on Fifth Avenue because it was just half-way between Henley's club, and the telephone which Silver had used. They dismissed one taxi and told the driver of the other to go up the Avenue and round the park.

"You frightened me," said Henley. "What has happened?"

It was not altogether truthful to say that nothing had happened, but it was truthful enough.

"I 'spect I'm silly and nervous about to-night," said Silver. "And I just wanted to be with you from now till then. Couldn't you take me out to the Country Club for lunch, and afterward we could watch them shoot clay pigeons?"

His hand dropped lightly on hers, and there remained for the next forty-two minutes. And it annoyed him very much to realize that taxicabs have windows through which inquisitive people may see those who are riding in them, and comment upon their behavior.

"When I'm with you," she said, "I'm not nervous or frightened about anything. And if I'm going to make good to-night I ought to have a peaceful and happy day."

"You are going to have a tremendous success," said Henley. "And if you were anybody but you I'd be terribly worried. Most girls would get their heads turned, and possibly sacrifice their best young men upon the altar of art."

"I can't help longing to have the audience like me," said Silver. "I can't help longing to have the biggest success that ever was. But I'd much rather be driving around in a taxi holding hands with you. See, I'm not a bit nervous any more."

She suddenly thrust her free arm through the open window, and waved to Mabel Reeves and Sam Waring. They were strolling slowly down the Avenue, Sam talking a blue streak.

"Looks as if Mabel had gone to school for nervousness, too," said Henley. "Is she worried about to-night?"

"Of course," said Silver, "but it isn't her first appearance. She'll have lots of friends in the audience already made. And I've got to make mine."

"All of them?"

"Oh, I've got you and Sam——"

"I don't count for much, but with Sam for a friend——"

"I suppose just you two together can make a noise like a large audience of people clapping their hands and shouting bravo. . . . Oh what *shall* I do, Paul, if I forget my part?"

"What put that idea in your head?"

"It's been hanging round like a hungry stray kitten for days, trying to get in—and I just let it in that's all, and it's grown to be a great big terrifying miawly cat."

Henley did not propose to aid and abet her in self-torture.

"Are your father and mother coming?" he asked.

"They've said not," Silver smiled, "so often, that I'm beginning to think they are. It would be the image of the captain to see the show and if he didn't like it and me in it, to trot right back to Hanleytown without letting on that he'd been here."

"I wouldn't wonder if there were a lot of Hanleytown people in front to-night. All the boys that are in love with you, Silver! They'll all have come on together by the New Bedford boat. They'll have sung close harmony all night, and about now they are putting their heads and funds together to offer you a floral tribute. I think it will take the form of a horseshoe, or possibly an anchor."

"I hope none of the old captains will come," said Silver. "One mistake about a ship spoils a whole play for an old captain. And there *are* mistakes. I've pointed out some of them to Mr. Hedden—just little simple obvious things—but he says he's writing for a New York audience, and that they don't even mind mistakes about New York, let alone ships."

"Except that he won't take advice," said Henley, "Hedden seems to have been pretty white to you, Silver?"

She gave him a doubtful little "yes."

"Anything wrong?—what has happened?"

"Only that I've just found out about the play,"

she said impulsively, "and I don't know what to do. Mr. Hedden says that it's his, every word of it, and we've had a row about that. I said I wouldn't play in it, unless he did the right thing, and he won't."

"You think he borrowed the play from some other fellow and won't give credit? Is that it?"

"*Is* that it, Paul?"

"Well," he said, "this play seems to have a lot of stuff in it that was in a play I once offered to Hedden. Sam read that play and he thinks so too. On the other hand, Hedden has a touch of genius, and he's done a whole lot with those ideas, that I didn't do. I hardly know what to claim and what not to claim. Sam and I have thrashed the whole thing over dozens of times, and we've concluded to accept the situation as a joke."

"Tell me one thing, Paul. If I wasn't mixed up with it, would you have interfered? Tell me honestly."

"Yes, dear," he said gravely. "I think so."

"I'll do anything you say, Paul. Do you want me to chuck the thing?"

"I'll tell you what I want you to do. I've got some money coming to me from my share in the mines, and I want you to drive with me first to the City Hall, and then to the nearest clergyman, and

then we'll jump on a boat and go to Jamaica, or Barbadoes, and have a look at the canal and loaf around till spring. That's what I want you to do!

"And wouldn't I love to!" he went on. "And yet you've gone so far now that it would be a pity not to make your hit first. And it would be selfish of me if I deprived New York of the chance to see you . . . what were you yourself thinking of doing about this mix-up?"

"I'll tell you," she said, "and you'll tell me if it's too silly and conceited." She talked very fast and apologetically for a long time, and Henley watched her all the time with amused and adoring eyes.

"And you see," she finished, "if by any possibility that did happen, why I'd have the whip-hand, wouldn't I? Whereas now, any value that I may represent is sheer guesswork. What do *you* think?"

"Seriously?"

"Seriously."

"I think you are sublime. And I love you so much that I'm going to take a chance of being seen by a policeman."

XLI

JUST when McKay Hedden, watch in hand, had made up his mind that she was not coming, she came. Henley was with her, Waring, and Miss Reeves. The quartet parted at the stage door, the gentlemen supplying the ladies with facetious advice and making light of the ordeal that was before them all. That it was an ordeal for Henley and Waring too was proved by the direction which they took immediately Silver and Mabel had left them. This direction was diagonally across the street to a certain Broadway corner, where above a revolving door of mahogany and plate glass was blazoned in electric lights the word "Café."

The young gentlemen ordered something, and Henley laid his watch face up on the bar. Waring, more accustomed to arriving at the last moment without being late, smiled.

"Opening performances are always the deuce of a while getting started," he said. "If we are in our seats at 8:25 we'll have hours to wait."

"It's supposed to begin at 8:15," said Henley

nervously. He set down his long glass so that it rattled upon the bar.

"I've got the shakes," he said.

It was ten minutes before eight and he looked appealingly at Waring.

"Don't you think," he said, "that it's rather fun to get to theatres early and watch the people come in?"

"Especially first-nighters," said Sam dryly. "No, I don't."

"It makes me sick," said Henley, "to think of poor little Silver going through what she's going through, and nobody to talk to."

"She's got her maid," said Waring. "And the women in the company will be running in and out of the dressing-room, borrowing things and wishing her luck. And besides, she's got her make-up to think about. Turn a girl loose with half a dozen sticks of grease-paints and a mirror, and she isn't going to worry about trifles."

"I think my watch is slow," said Henley.

"What makes you think that?"

"It *looks* slow to me. Don't you think it looks slow, Sam."

"This bar," said Waring, "has a bell that rings five minutes before the curtains go up in Hedden's theatre."

"But maybe the wire is down."

"Why should it be?"

"There was a very high wind last night, wasn't there?"

Waring thrust his tongue into his cheek.

"If you were going to be hanged, personally," he said, "you'd give a better exhibition than you're giving now."

Henley smiled, but he also shivered.

"If it's any comfort to you, Paul, I'm just as scared as you are. So, if you like, we'll go across."

They paid their shot, bought some cigarettes for the entr'actes, and returned to the theatre. Except for the ushers, and one man in the last row of the balcony immediately behind a post, the place was empty. It was just eight o'clock.

They did not at once go to their seats, but strolled about or stood and leaned. Another gentleman appeared in the balcony, and was shown to another seat behind another post. Even with the curtain down this appeared to inconvenience him, and he could be seen craning his neck first to one side of it, then to the other, for all the world like a turtle. Presently he took up his hat and coat and marched out. They could hear him expostulating with the powers in the box-office; presently, however, he returned to his seat, and

took up the work of craning where he had left off. At this point a very small boy, filled to the brim with very bad language, staggered in with an enormous bundle of programmes. These, the outer covering of heavy Manila paper being removed, gave out the strong smell of printers' ink.

The programmes were a diversion not to be despised. Henley and Waring pounced upon them, and Waring got himself into a mess of repartee with the small boy who had brought them.

McKay Hedden suddenly appeared.

He walked swiftly down an aisle, halted, turned, folded his arms and looked the empty house over. He resembled Napoleon in the act of choosing a battle-field. He was joined presently by a harassed attendant who carried a glass-and-rubber atomizer, the reservoir half filled with a dark-brown liquid.

Upon a nod from the master, the man pressed the rubber bulb, and a dustlike spray shot from the nozzle.

McKay Hedden sniffed critically. Then nodded approval. And then waved his right arm in a half circle. At this the attendant dashed about the theatre shooting random sprays from the atomizer. He suggested a frenzied amateur orchardist whose favorite trees have extended hospitality to the San José scale.

Hedden caught sight of Henley and Waring, and approached them. He gave Henley a look half defiant, half beseeching—as much as to say: "You can't possibly make any trouble for me; but please don't try."

"You have seen the programmes?"

"Capital!" said Waring.

"You like them? I sat up all of one night with the types."

"Tell me one thing, Mr. Hedden," said Henley, "is that man disinfecting the theatre—or what?"

"What man? Oh, the man with the atomizer! He is sprinkling the atmosphere with a special spray that I have had prepared by one of New York's most expert chemists. We call it Marine emulsion. It has a tar-and-turpentine basis. It prepares the audience through the olfactory nerves for the wharfs and shipping which they are to see. It's like a Wagnerian motif. . . . There, did you get a whiff then? . . ."

They did. And indeed the theatre had begun to smell like a ship.

"Oh," cried Hedden, "if some fool of a patchoulied woman doesn't drown it out."

He turned and drifted from them; occasionally snapping his right thumb and forefinger.

In the meanwhile some tens of people had arrived. It was seven minutes past eight.

Waring caught Henley in the act of filling his lungs with air to their utmost capacity and letting it almost fiercely out again. He laughed. And a moment later was doing the same thing himself.

"My God!" exclaimed Henley. "I wish it was over."

"Let's sit down else we'll begin to see people we know and have to talk to them."

As their seats were on an aisle they did not occupy them long in peace. Every now and then they had to tumble out into the aisle to let people pass through to the seats beyond them. A lady stabbed Henley in the right eye with a stiff hat feather. He begged her pardon most humbly. She turned to beg his, and in so doing stabbed her own escort in the left eye. A stout gentleman stepped on Waring's foot, and there remained, without apology, while divesting himself of his coat. A stout gentleman in the front row suddenly turned a congested purple and sneezed frightfully. He sneezed twenty-one times. Some automatic machinery in the back of Henley's head kept count. The stout lady with the stout gentleman kept thumping him on the back.

The theatre was practically full now. There

was what the newspapers sometimes call a very brilliant audience. Society was unusually well represented, for Silver Sands had made many friends. There was a sprinkling of women with short hair and massive oriental jewelry. There were critics of all sorts of shapes and sizes who wore all sorts of eye-glasses and all shapes and varieties of dress suits. Many of them were accompanied by artistic women, very long from the hip to the knee, having bends instead of joints and immense wads of hair. And there were many, both men and women, who had not paid for their seats; you could spot these by their proud and contemptuous expression.

The fifth row centre from aisle to aisle was empty. This worried Henley terribly. He nudged Waring.

"Theatre-party," he whispered hoarsely. "They'll be late."

And he was furious with them. His eyes kept roving from the empty seats to the back of the theatre. If they were going to make a disturbance that should injure Silver's success, he wished he had them on a cannibal isle before the Christians came, so he did.

Meanwhile there had been a muffled tuning of instruments, and now a hidden orchestra, mostly

strings, began to whisper forth old songs from its hiding-place.

"The Fairy Tempter."

"'Twere Vain to Tell Thee All I Feel."

"The True Heart of Woman."

"Kind, Kind and Gentle She," etc., etc., all woven in and out of each other with strictly modern harmonies and modulations and sounding wonderfully eerie and sweet.

Then there was quite a long silence.

During this the theatre-party made its entrance. They were mostly boys and girls in the late teens, and seeing this, Henley's anger vanished. One of the girls was so gentle and sweet and eager-looking that she reminded him of Silver. And the boys were nice clean gentlemanly boys. Any one could see that. What a remarkable feat, he thought, to get so many young people to a given place at a given time.

Without warning, the orchestra literally leaped from hiding with the most stirring and rollicking of all the topsail-halyard chanties that have ever been made in the world.

"As I was walking down Paradise Street,
To me, way hay, blow the man down,
A flash looking Packet I chanced for to meet,
Give us some time to blow the man down.

"I tailed her my flipper and took her in tow,
To me, way hay, blow the man down,
And yard-arm to yard-arm away we did go,
Give us some time to blow the man down."

And the curtain went up, and there drifted across the footlights the smell of shipping and wharfs and salt wind. . . . And Henley began to shake and shiver inside. To the outward view, however, he appeared pale and a little bored.

Until Silver's first entrance the audience was a little puzzled. They liked the extraordinary salt atmosphere that Hedden and his chemists had managed to create. But either the acoustics weren't very good or that little knot of seamen weren't talking English. As a matter of fact, they weren't. Three of them were talking frank, fragrant, utterly technical ship talk, and the two others, the very brown seamen with gold rings in their ears, were talking pure Portuguese, or it may not have been pure; I don't know. Furthermore, the old sea-captain, who looked as if he had stepped out of a daguerreotype, puzzled them. He is "discovered" at the edge of the wharf looking through an old tarry telescope of canvas and brass. He takes it down and wipes the lenses with a red handkerchief. Then he lifts it to his eye again. Then takes it down, shuts it, and starts

to walk away. He stumbles against something, swears a round oath, and turns toward the audience; and one look at his eyes shows that he is stone blind. It was at this moment that one of the jointless women said loudly to her escort: "But what is the precise significance of it all?"

And then the audience was puzzled by a sudden soft disordered music as of harp-strings picked at random, and was not happy until it began to be whispered from seat to seat that that was the wind in the rigging of the whale-ship whose blunt nose and uptowering bowsprit occupied the centre of the ship—the whale-ship whose figurehead comes to life, later on in the act. And a small boy saw the figurehead wriggle as if it itched, and so told his mother in a shrill voice, and she told him in a still shriller voice to keep quiet.

Then Silver came, and the audience forgot that it had been puzzled and allowed to think for itself, and forgave. "I'm *so* sorry," she said. And it was right and fitting that she should say just that, neither more nor less at that very moment, and in precisely the way she said it. And I think that voice pierced every heart in that theatre with its sweetness and tenderness. The most critical eyes softened. The most experienced playgoers settled themselves to uncritical enjoyment. She had ap-

peared, she had spoken once, she had cast a spell.

As the act flashed along from humor to pathos, to tenderness, to hints of the tragical, and from one surprise to the next, it dawned upon Henley and Waring that Silver was acting as she had never acted before. From the charm and feeling and poise that she had shown at rehearsals she had soared upward to dizzy heights of mastery and power. There was magic in her.

Even when the real live sea-gull lights on the stage and flies off (left) with a dead mouse, the audience was not as delighted as it should have been.

They wanted Silver to come back to them. Why the devil had the author taken her away even for a minute? Everybody knows that a live sea-gull and a dead mouse aren't enough to fill a stage!

The man didn't know his business!

But she came back and stayed till the curtain went down. And this was no sooner down than it went up again. And so on, for many times; almost like a ball bouncing. And at last Silver came out all alone, covered with confusion now, and tingling with delight. New York has not seen many such ovations as the people whose hearts and minds she had stormed now gave her. And she couldn't help

being so happy about it that for a while she forgot all about Hedden and the wrong he was doing Paul and almost everything else in the world that made for trouble and uncertainty.

They loved her, all those people down there and she loved them back. . . .

Henley and Waring, almost in tears with excitement, delight, and relief, went out to smoke and to listen. "What a treasure McKay Hedden has discovered! How like him! And *what* a play he had written! And wasn't *that* the image of him! Oh, no, of course it might be only a first act; but he knew his business if anybody did! Who else in this world would have thought of bringing that figurehead to life? And yet it was the only possible thing to do, a fool could see that!"

The young men were absorbed in their eavesdropping. Somehow it did not offend them to hear people's efforts at dissecting Silver's beauty and charm into their component parts.

They found themselves liking people of repellent aspect whom they could not have liked on any other occasion or for any other reason. And from Henley, even the praises of Hedden fell as water from a duck's back.

"The most original playwright we have ever produced," said one critic to a number. "And

he named as proof half a dozen inventions in that first act for which Henley himself was entirely responsible.

"Run?" said another critic. "It'll run like shad in spring; but that isn't the question. Will it ever stop running? Will the public ever let that girl play anything else?"

Henley nudged Waring.

"Didn't I tell you she had the right notion of how to manage?" he asked boastfully. "Didn't I tell you?"

"You did," said Waring. "And if after tonight Hedden isn't ready and willing to eat out of her hand, we'll have him committed for lunacy!"

A sharply whirring bell admonished them to return to their seats for the second act.

XLII

WHOEVER had the privilege of seeing the first performance of "When My Ship Comes In" was raving about it the next day. And that is the kind of advertising that counts. Silver Sands, after a late delightful supper-party given in her honor by Sam Waring—a very large affair in a beautiful private room, slept the sleep of happy exhaustion and woke at eleven o'clock to find herself famous. Some of the papers said she was great; others said that she wasn't exactly great but that she was going to be. One critic talked about the early days of Miss Ellen Terry, and made comparisons. Another recalled Miss Maude Adams in the "Masked Ball." The line of Miss Sands's lower jaw, and her intense reserve in a scene where another might have discovered an excuse for screams and violence, reminded the *Morning Gazette* of Duse. The *Chronotype* made much of her voice, inflection and accents. *Everyday* headed its critique: "Something more that we owe to New England."

To say that the immense pile of newspapers on

her bed gave Silver Sands no pleasure would be absurd. Your true artist, I know very well, disdains criticism and is far above it—except when it is pleasant. But Silver Sands wasn't all artist yet. When she grew warmly loquacious, which was not often, it was not about art, but about boats, and swimming, and pretty clothes, and good times. She was very young, she was very much in love, and by the grace of God with a young man who was also very much in love with her, and she had made a very big hit and she was very happy. After herself, the papers gave the most praise to Miss Reeves. She had outdone herself, they said. One had learned to look to her for a competent, finished but not precisely inspired performance. It seemed that one had been wrong. One gracefully acknowledged it. Not a little of the play's tremendous success was owing to her. One took off one's hat to a rising star. If one knew anything at all, she would soon be given a play and a company of her own. She had earned them.

And all this praise of her friend added immensely to Silver's enjoyment of the morning papers.

She had read about three criticisms when she leaped out of bed, ran to Miss Reeves's room and waked her with joyous alarms.

"Mabel! Mabel!" she cried. "Wake up.

We've made an awful hit. You've made an awful hit and I've made an awful hit. Come into my room and read the papers. Paul's sent 'em all in, all the papers in the world."

It was a newsy morning. In southern Europe a potentate had been assassinated in mediæval fashion. A couple of Americans had been butchered in Mexico. Lives had been lost in a Chicago fire. The administration had thought up something new and splendid, properly calculated to complete the ruin of business—and what was all this to Mabel Reeves and to Silver Sands? With jubilant cries they pored over the papers until they came to the dramatic reviews, and among these there would be only the one that interested them the least bit in the world. If the entire population of China had been boiled in oil overnight those selfish girls wouldn't have cared a hang.

"You're making up as you go along. Does he really say that—Silver? Really?"

"Here, read it yourself. You've got your elbow on the *Sun*. I want the *Sun*. The *Sun!* The *Sun!*" Did she read that fulminating editorial about the secretary of state? And what if he should die? One could at least convert him into glue. Or does one only make glue from horses? . . . No, she skipped that.

"Oh, Mabel, here's another says I've got a chin like Duse. Did you ever see Duse? What sort of a chin has she got? Is it a nice sort of a chin to have?"

Miss Reeves answered with a shout of joy. "This man says: 'Not only that, but she looked as pretty as a picture, and much too young to be out so late.'—That's me—me—me!"

And they read and read aloud, to themselves, both at once, and they commented and exulted, and presently they got into such high spirits that they began to illustrate the criticisms for each other's benefit; as: "In this scene Miss Sands showed infinite reserve." And here Silver thrust her chin very far forward (to resemble Duse) and turned up her nose very high to indicate reserve, and wrapped herself so tightly in her own arms that Mabel Reeves almost died of laughing.

And after they had had enough buffoonery to last them all day, and had read all the criticisms more than once, and not a line of anything else, they deigned to remember that even the most famous persons bathe, and brush their teeth, and dress to go out, and do their hair, and eat breakfast.

XLIII

THE four young people had lunch at their favorite restaurant. Silver and Mabel, having just breakfasted, could not, of course, eat anything. But they fooled with grapefruit and turned two very modest helpings of salad upside down with their forks. This lack of appetite and the fact that almost everybody in the room spent seven-eighths of the time looking at them, did not, however, make them unhappy. Silver's good looks had always attracted attention. She was so used to this that she no longer noticed it. But today the attention which she attracted could not pass unnoticed. And she was amused by it and elated.

Head waiters could be seen bending discreetly forward from the waist, cocking alert bird-like heads to one side and discreetly answering indiscreet questions. Who was that young lady that everybody was looking at? That was the famous Miss Silver Sands. Dear me, he didn't mean to say so! And which of the gentlemen was her husband? She was not married. Heavens! Would he be so good as to ask the man in the office

to telephone for two seats for to-night, down in front on an aisle? He was very sorry, unless from a speculator, at an enormous premium, there were no seats to be had. The theatre had been sold out at an early hour that morning, sold out for that night—for many nights, etc., etc.

"What does being famous feel like?" Henley asked her.

"It feels like being on top of a high mountain, no hat on your head, and the wind blowing."

"But you've never been on top of a high mountain. Where she comes from—" he explained to the others, "the highest thing is a lighthouse, and the next highest is an ant-heap."

"Just the same," said Silver, "that's the way it feels. Ask Mabel."

"Oh, but I'm not famous."

"We'll get Mr. Hedden to introduce some marines in the last act and you can make that statement to them."

"Were you frightened at any time?" Waring asked. "You said you were going to be."

"I was frightened when I had to sing," said Silver. "I tried to try the song over while I was powdering my nose, and I couldn't make a sound. I couldn't do anything but swallow. It was awful."

"Have you seen Hedden since last night?"

"Yes. He wanted us to have lunch with him. But I think he was pleased when we said we couldn't."

"I think," said Mabel, "that he wanted to lunch at the Players—all by himself. So that his fellow managers and play-writers could have a good look at him, and where later, when they insisted upon knowing, he could tell them just how he came to write the play."

She looked directly at Henley.

"How did you come to write it?" she asked.

"If Hedden has borrowed something," said Henley gravely, "and either he has or all the laws of coincidence have been put out of business, he deserves great mental, if not moral, credit. As it stands it's a rattling good play. And I'm quite ready to take off my hat to one side of the man, while I kick the other."

"When you've got your hat off," said Waring, "I'll be very glad to hold it for you while you do the kicking. Only if I do, you must promise not to take the shoe off your kicking foot."

Waring had been unusually silent. And this was his first long speech.

"Please," said Silver, "don't let's talk about him. Couldn't Mabel and I just be allowed for

one day, maybe two days, to think about the hit we've made and nothing else?"

She pushed back her chair a little.

"We're through, aren't we?" she asked gayly. "Because Paul is going to drive me to Riverside and we're to walk back. I'm to be exercised like a horse. As if being famous wasn't enough to keep one fit. Want to come?"

The invitation was honest. But Mabel Reeves and Waring were unanimous in declining.

"Don't worry about us!" said Waring manfully. "You're not the only young couple in New York. Others when left to themselves don't find time hanging heavily on their hands. Do they?"

He put the question directly to Miss Reeves, but she did not give him the playfully enthusiastic answer which his intonation called for. Instead, she smiled, a little vaguely, a little as if it hurt her perhaps, and nodded.

"Why," she asked him a little later, having seen Silver and Henley into a taxi and turned slowly toward the Avenue, "do you always pretend when they are around, that we're just another *couple?* You play about a lot with me, and you're sweet to me, but your heart is with her all the time. And I don't think you ought to joke about things."

They reached the corner of that street and Fifth Avenue.

"Up or down?" asked Waring.

"Home, I think," she said. "It's blowing too hard to be any fun walking."

He lifted the forefinger of his right hand and secured a taxi.

"May I come, too?"

"Do you want to?"

"Of course I do."

He sat down beside her and closed the door.

"Listen," he said, "I'm no good. I can't stick to anything. When I said that others left to themselves didn't find time hanging heavily, I spoke for myself and I meant it. Do you know that if you try very hard not to want a thing, all of a sudden you stop wanting it?"

"Do you?"

"Yes, and you get to wanting something else."

He blushed a little and hung his head.

"I've always wanted some girl or other," he said, "and I've always been thrown down, and had to stop wanting. My father guessed about Silver, seein' how glum I was getting. And I told him it wasn't the first time I'd been miserable about a girl and I hoped to heaven it wouldn't be the last."

"Do you mean—that you're not in love with Silver any more?"

"It would have had to stop some time. A man might be in love with his own girl all his life, but not with somebody else's girl. I wanted and wanted to stop loving her. And I've stopped."

Miss Reeves laughed, but not mirthfully.

"Here we are," she said.

"Do I come up or do I go away?"

"You come up if you want to, and if you don't, you don't."

"I hoped you were interested in what I was saying and wanted me to go on."

"Well," she said, "to be quite honest, I do."

So he went up with her to the pretty little drawing-room which she shared with Silver, and there seated himself in a narrow window-seat between two white muslin curtains which he began at once to twist and muss.

"Did it ever strike you?" he said, "that you and I get along first-rate together? Do you like being with me? I love being with you. And last night I was so worried and frightened for fear you wouldn't do yourself justice, I was almost as bad as Paul was about Silver.

"And afterward, when it was all over, I was so

proud of you. Because I've always said you had it in you! Haven't I?"

"Yes," she said, "always. And that's been one of the things that's kept me trying."

"Honestly?"

"Honestly."

"And now Hedden will be wanting to star you. Will you stand for it?"

"Of course. Standing for things is my bread and butter."

"Do you like acting any better now that you've made a big hit?"

"Yes, of course. But not enough."

"You'd do most anything if you could quit, wouldn't you?"

She nodded and said:

"Almost anything."

"But you wouldn't marry a rich man you didn't love?"

"I said 'almost' anything. I didn't say 'absolutely everything', did I?"

"But suppose he was a nice sort of fellow, whom you'd always liked in a sort of way. And suppose he was very crazy about you?"

At this moment the muslin curtains came down, brass rod and all. Waring disentangled himself from the wreck.

"That proves I'm nervous!" he exclaimed. "But just the same there's something I want to say and I'm going to say it."

He came toward her, a kind of playful liquid fire in his eyes.

"Look here," he said, "ever since I was a kiddie, I've wanted some girl or other, and now it's you. It came over me last night like a thunderclap. I've loved you ever since you tied the blind captain's necktie for him after he'd been knocked down and run over. And you may think I'm just a faithless, no-account person—but if I knew you were going to belong to me, then I could love you all I wanted to and never stop. I've stopped lovin' people, not because I'm fickle, but because I had to stop. It's up to you, Mabel."

"And I'm to say whether I'll take a love that's lasted since last night, and that belonged to lots of other girls before me——"

"Only theoretically, Mabel. Never practically. That makes a difference, doesn't it?"

"Not to me," she said.

"Don't be mean, Mabel!"

"Mean? I'm not mean. I'm telling the truth. It doesn't make any difference to me how many girls you've loved if you love me now. But do you? Sure?"

"You just bet I do," he said, and came closer. "It began when you tied that poor blind captain's necktie for him, and it's lasted ever since, and if you'll only make it right, it'll last always."

"Sam," she said, "have you never guessed that I've always been in love with you?"

"You—with me? Oh, for God's sake!"

And he caught her, half sobbing, half laughing, in his strong arms, and hugged her for all she was worth.

XLIV

MEANWHILE Captain Sands, unknown to Silver, had received long telegrams from Henley and Waring telling him of his daughter's success. And he and his wife, oblivious of the fear that away from Hanleytown they might be recognized, and the captain held on a charge of murder for a very justifiable and partially accidental homicide, were on their way to New York.

And their visit was to be a surprise to Silver. Henley and Waring had arranged everything. The proud parents should see a performance of the play. And Silver should know nothing of their presence in New York until she left the theatre and found them waiting in her taxicab. That cab would proceed at once to a famous supper place, where the gentlemen and Miss Reeves, having as usual secured an excellent table by bribery, would meet them.

And all these secret plans were carried out without a hitch. Those who had been moved by Silver earlier in the evening and had gone away saying that charm and delightfulness could go no further, should have seen her, when she stepped into what

she supposed was an empty taxicab and found her father and mother. These were already dissolved into tears of joy, and at once Silver with the most loving little exclamations and inarticulations melted too. And they reached for her as two fond old bears may be supposed to reach for a long-lost cub, and she went down between them and was kissed and pawed and praised. And every now and then Captain Sands would say as gruffly as he could:

"We thought we'd just run down and see the show."

There was in the ladies' dressing-room at the famous supper place a very clever maid who could make a dishevelled old woman and a dishevelled young beauty look like new. And Miss Reeves was there to help.

As for Captain Sands, that pseudo-navigator found himself taken in hand by two good-natured Brummels who conducted him first to a pair of hair-brushes, and then to a pair of cocktails.

The party made a triumphant entry into the supper room. I say triumphant, for many girls would have hesitated at publicly claiming Captain and Mrs. Sands for parents. They were out of date, they were not smart, and they were red with excitement and pleasure and awkwardness and em-

barrassment. But Silver did not think of such things. She only thought how happy she was to have them with her, and how much she loved everybody who had had a hand in arranging the surprise for her. The long passage to their table, continually interrupted by men jumping to their feet to exchange friendly words with her, and by her own habit of stopping to speak to every woman who had ever spoken kindly to her was not an ordeal. Whenever she had a chance she introduced her friends to her father and mother, and she so shone with joy and pride that she resembled a child on its way to a Christmas tree.

It began as a supper party, and it ended in the small hours as a reception. Men and women came and went but mostly stayed. The table, magiced by waiters, grew larger and larger. Hedden, brazen as brass, insinuated himself between Captain and Mrs. Sands, and made himself charming. Van Brunt came and brought a friend, Nellie Michelin, dressed a little like a queen in an opera; and lips were loosened and pleasant, mirthful speech flowed.

Not even Hedden's presence worried Silver. Her debts, her one-sided contract with him, his theft of the play, the imminent and disagreeable interview in which she hoped once for all to settle

these matters, had vanished even from the back of her mind, and she was allowed to love the moments even in their swift passing.

Silver could not put her parents up for the night. But she put them up till four in the morning, when Henley and Waring drove them to their hotel.

"Mum," said the now sleepy Captain Sands, "are we starting back for Hanleytown—to-day?"

"No, we're not," she said. "There's McKay Hedden's lunch for us to-morrow, and Paul's supper, he wouldn't let me off unless I called him Paul, and you just bet your bottom dollar I'm a-going to see Silver act again and then some!"

"Mum," he said, his voice trembling with eagerness, "if it costs us our bottom dollar let's stay—a week!"

Mrs. Sands hurled herself upon her husband's breast and clung to him.

XLV

THERE was a set look about Silver's face which told McKay Hedden that she was very much in earnest about something. The immense success of "When My Ship Comes In" and the lavish tributes to his genius both from subsidized and independent newspapers had lulled him into a blissful security. The play was going to have a record run and he was going to be once more the most enviable and envied of managers. Silver's rebellion had been short-lived. She was high spirited, he told himself, but not tenacious. Furthermore, she had tasted that most pernicious of habit makers—success. And he assured himself that the ovation of five evening and one afternoon performances must have poisoned her sense of right and wrong. To find that he had misjudged her came then as a great shock.

"It is a success, isn't it?" she began.

"It is the greatest success that New York has seen in ten years, and you, my dear Silver, are—well, I just worship the ground that your feet make artistic merely by stepping on it. And you seem

to have inspired a whole company of experienced actors to play better than they ever played before."

"Will it make lots of money for you?" Silver asked. "But you needn't say, because people who know about such things have told me, and I know that it will. So couldn't you do now what I asked you to the other day?"

"And what was that?"

"I'm sure you haven't forgotten," said Silver gently, "but I'm to ask more now. I've talked with my friends, and they sent out for a lawyer, and we told him all about the play, and how much Mr. Henley had had to do with it, and all about my wretched extravagance, and how you had seemed to be so good to me about money and all about my contract and how you said it couldn't be broken because of your company, but that you personally would see that I didn't suffer. . . . Oh!" she exclaimed, "according to the lawyer I've made an awful mess of things, through ignorance and foolishness and through believing that everybody was kind and good. But do you know what the lawyer said, Mr. Hedden—about you? He just laughed and said 'So Hedden's been up to his old tricks again!' He said that you trapped me and netted me, and had not given me a fair

deal, and," she finished breathlessly, "he advised me to give you till Monday to make everything right, and if you wouldn't, not to make any more money for you. He said he wouldn't bother to take the case into court. So I'll play to-night and you'll have all Sunday to make up your mind, and if you won't do what's right, why then I won't act any more and neither will Miss Reeves."

"What in the devil," cried Hedden, "has she got to do with it?"

"She's a friend of Mr. Henley's and she's a friend of mine and she's going to marry Mr. Waring——"

"What do you want me to do?" said Hedden shrilly, "to give Henley credit on the programme for a play he didn't write? To let you off a lot of money that you owe me? I've got your notes for every cent of it—do you know that?"

"Yes, I know. And you'll be paid."

"Oh, you've arranged that, too."

"Yes."

"I suppose this everlasting Henley has struck it rich."

"That's just it," said Silver.

"Do you know what you're mixed up in, Silver? Blackmail! This is blackmail."

"Nonsense," said Silver. "It isn't anything of the kind, and you know it."

"You've got no gratitude in you. My God, when I think how I labored over you, taught you step by step."

"I'm grateful for many things, Mr. Hedden. And about Mr. Henley's share in the play and the contract and all that, I'm only sorry and I dare say I'd have let things drift along if there had been nothing else. But you've done one thing that I can't forgive. One despicable thing. One day there was a letter for me at the Hanleytown post-office. You called for the mail, and I never got that letter. I can't forgive that. . . . Please don't protest and say you didn't . . . it's no use. The postmaster remembers perfectly well. I tried to stand up for you and believe in you till I learned about that, and—and so you have till Monday morning." She finished somewhat lamely. There was a long silence. Then Hedden cried:

"I did take that letter. I loved you. I love you. And all is fair in love and war."

Silver shook her head.

"Only what is fair in hatred and peace," she said, "or at any other time, is fair in love and war. There aren't any exceptions at all."

At this moment the telephone rang and Hedden

seized the receiver with a kind of impatient rage.

"Mrs. Michelin wants to see me? Tell her I don't want to see *her.*"

He was about to hang up the receiver.

"Wait!" he cried. "Let her come up at once. She wants money. I remember now. She shall have it."

"So," Silver repeated, "you have till Monday to think things over."

"You're giving me a rotten deal, Silver."

"Nonsense. I am giving you a chance to act like a real man. And if you will act like a real man, why Mabel Reeves and I will keep on doing our level best until the play dies a natural death."

"Silver, one minute——"

But she had gone, and he could hear her exchanging greetings with Nellie Michelin in the hall. A moment later, the latter, harassed and tired, swept into the room.

"Mac," she said, "if I can't raise fifteen hundred they'll put me in jail."

"People don't go to jail for debt."

"If I can't stop being hounded and harassed I'll just about cut my throat one of these days. Won't you please help me, Mac? You're making loads of money out of your new play, and it don't seem

fair when I've worked so hard and faithfully I should be miserable all the time—all the time—about money."

He smiled pleasantly.

"Nellie," he said, "I'll help you this time—if you'll help me. I'm in a hole, too. How much do you owe altogether?"

She named a sum that caused him to blink and frown. Nevertheless, he reached for his checkbook and began to write in it. When he had finished he tore out the check and showed it to her.

"Oh, Mac!" she cried, reaching for it, "you're a darling!"

He did not at once give her the check.

"Now," he said, "I've written something for you and I want you to write something for me."

"One of those tiresome notes."

"A different kind of a note, two notes. No, take a sheet that hasn't the office heading. And I want one other thing."

"What's that?"

"The use of your apartment for twenty-four hours."

This request did not seem pleasant to her. She looked at him a little pityingly, a little contemptuously, but she said: "All right. If you must."

"This is the first note," he dictated and she wrote:

"You Dear Thing:

"Mac has just given me a lot of money. He says I am to thank you for softening his heart. I do a million times. God bless you.

"Nellie Michelin."

"Put in a few crosses for kisses," said Hedden grimly, "and confess that the whole note is characteristic. Now write Silver's name on the envelope, no address."

Mrs. Michelin did this and was about to fold the note and seal it in the envelope, when Hedden, somewhat roughly snatched it away, and placed another sheet before her.

"Now write," he said, "write this: If you have any friendship for me, please come to my flat at once. I am in terrible trouble and must see you. Please, please do this for me.

"Nellie Michelin."

"Who's that to go to?" asked Mrs. Michelin in a hard knowing voice.

"Oh," he said carelessly, "you wouldn't remember. You've befriended a good many people in your time."

This was true. In her big-hearted foolish way

Nellie Michelin had been always lending and lending to those who were even less fortunate than she was.

"It's a dirty sort of trap, Mac."

"It's a biggish sort of check, Nellie. And don't fret. There won't be any row. I give you my word. It's only that I've got to see a certain person without interruption. This isn't a trap for innocence. I'm no spider and she's no fly. It's business."

"I wish I could believe you."

"Shall I tear up this check?"

She took the check and burst into foolish tears.

When at last she had gone, McKay Hedden took the second note and placed it in the envelope addressed to Silver Sands. The first note he merely tore across and across and tossed into a waste-paper basket.

Nellie Michelin was a very slow thinker. But she was very persistent. All day as she drove about town settling old bills and contracting new ones, she kept thinking. And about half past five her long concentration began to be rewarded with a little gleam of light.

She drove to her apartment and told her maid that if she wished she could go to Brooklyn and spend the night with her family.

"I shan't need you," said Mrs. Michelin, "because after the theatre, I am going to the country with the McTavitts' for over Sunday. You may pack my bag and small steamer trunk before you go."

Mrs. Michelin's maid was delighted. She was always longing for the delights of home life in Brooklyn. Her family consisted of a sportily dressed young clerk in the dry-goods way, and she used to come back from the pies like mother used to make smelling vaguely of beer.

XLVI

THE note was handed to Silver during the last intermission. She had just taken a curtain call; she read the note to a loud accompaniment of handclapping, and once more stepped shyly and sweetly before the curtain to thank her admirers for their enthusiasm.

Then she ran for her dressing-room to make her last change; on the way she passed McKay Hedden. There was a peculiar smile on his face, nervous and triumphant.

"You think I'll come to time, Monday," he seemed to say, "but I won't, and you will."

For once she felt afraid of him.

While she was changing an usher brought her a note from Henley. He couldn't see her right after the performance, he said, something very important had turned up which he and Sam must attend to. He would see her the first thing in the morning, though, and explain.

So her poor little head was full of things, of Nellie Michelin's sudden trouble and what it could be, of that sinister terrible triumphant look in

Hedden's eyes, and of Henley finding something more important than waiting for her after the play and taking her to supper. For all that, she gave during that long last act, bristling with emotions, the most charming and moving performance she had yet given, and she had to go before the curtain so many times that when they finally let her off there was hardly anybody left behind the scenes but her maid and the electrician. Mabel Reeves had not waited to speak to her or left any message.

Not long after Silver rang the bell of Nellie Michelin's front door. The door opened and Silver stepped into the familiar little mirrored hall. She could not at once see who had opened the door for her.

It was McKay Hedden.

"I had a note from Nellie asking me to come," said Silver, not pleased at seeing Hedden, "where is she?"

"She wants us to wait," said Hedden. And he closed the door.

"She asked you to come, too?"

"Here I am."

"What does she want?"

"Didn't she tell you?"

"No."

"Nor me."

"Well," said Silver, a little pettishly, "I suppose we must wait."

And she walked into the little drawing-room upon which Mrs. Michelin had spent so much money, in which she wrote so many notes, telephoned so often, and begun so many pieces on the pianoforte. There was a bright fire burning.

"I'd like a glass of water," said Silver. "Will you please ring?"

Hedden shrugged his shoulders.

"There is no one to answer the bell," he said, and he closed the door by which they had entered the room.

"Why shut the door?" asked Silver.

He made no answer, but stood looking at her and trying to smile. His obvious nervousness was contagious.

"If it was so important for Nellie to see me," said Silver, "she ought to have been here. It's late and I'm tired. I think I won't wait any longer."

"Oh, you'd better wait a little while," said Hedden, "I want to talk to you about that ultimatum of yours."

"Yes?" said Silver.

"It's no good, Silver," he said, "no good. You know what Mahomet did about the mountain? I

find that I can't meet your wishes, and so I have decided that you must meet mine."

He advanced a step toward her. She stood with her back to the fire, her hands behind her. She looked very tall, for her, and a little pale and fragile.

"That is a foolish speech," she said.

"No, it isn't, Silver. New York is a very large city and none of your friends knows where you are at this minute. I watched you from the time you received Nellie's note until you left the theatre. You told no one where you were going. I arrived here only a mintue or two ahead of you. And," he concluded, rubbing his hands as if he was washing them, "here we are."

Silver was frightened, but she did not show it.

"What difference does it make," she said, "whether my friends know where I am or not. *I* know. And I know where I am going."

She started for the door, but Hedden blocked the way.

"I wouldn't go if I were you," he said. "Don't be afraid. I won't touch you. I want you to listen to what I have to say calmly. Then, if you still want to go, I won't try to detain you. But you won't want to go."

"I don't want to listen to you," said Silver.

"You'd better. Not for your own sake, perhaps, but for your father's."

"What has he to do with this?"

"Before you were born, Silver, your father killed a man—murdered him. The police have been looking for him ever since. I know where he is."

"And you," she said, "are such an unmitigated liar that——"

He stepped humbly to one side, and waved his hand toward the door.

"While you are waiting for the elevator," he said, "I shall be telephoning to the Central Office."

She came close to him, and he shrank from her a little, still he met her blazing look without flinching, and with a sudden dreadful shrinking of her heart, she knew that for once he had not lied.

"It accounts, doesn't it," he said, "for the way he's clung to Hanleytown these many years, never venturing as far as the mainland for fear of being taken?"

And it did account for many things, which hitherto had never needed to be accounted for. And as these things passed in review through her mind, one after another, she was silent, and almost oblivious of her whereabouts and of Hedden's threatening presence. At last she spoke.

"What," she said, "must I do, to keep you from telling?"

"Well, at least," he said, "you must stay here a while and talk it over with me."

"You have a piece of knowledge that you wish to sell, isn't that it?" She drew a long breath. "Well, how much?"

"A great deal, Silver."

"I know that. How much?"

"All that you have to give, Silver: Faith, constancy, obedience—love."

She appeared to consider this price which she was to pay as if it were so many dollars and cents.

"You must promise to marry me," he said, "and you must make that promise good within twenty-four hours. And in the meanwhile—you see if I let you go you would tell your father and give him a chance to get out of the country, and then you would go back on your promise—so in the meanwhile we—we mustn't separate."

If he had known her better he would have seen a storm gathering in her eyes. She backed slowly toward the fire, as if she were cold.

"Nobody need know for a time that we were married," said Hedden. "Nobody need ever know that we were here together to-night."

He came slowly toward her.

"Silver," he pleaded, "I will be a good husband to you."

"How could you be," she said gently, "you haven't even been a good friend. You're not even a good man. And I couldn't be a good wife to you. I couldn't possibly give you faith, constancy, obedience, and love." Her voice rose and strengthened. "I could only," she said, "give you possession and—contempt."

She turned her back on him, and bending over deliberately as if to rearrange the logs, caught up a heavy brass poker and once more, swift as thought, faced him.

Her eyes were blazing with outrage and fury. He shrank from them.

"The only thing," she said, "to do with a thing like you is to kill it. If you think you've trapped a weak, fainting sort of girl, you've made a sad mistake. You've trapped a girl who's spent her life swimming and boating and doing chores, and wishing she was a boy so she could wrestle and fight——"

McKay Hedden's left elbow shot up to guard his head, and the poker descended with an awful despairing force upon his funny-bone. The man screamed aloud and went down in a writhing heap like a spider touched by fire.

Death itself is seldom so painful as a blow on the funny-bone. McKay Hedden was as completely out of the combat as if he had been shot through the heart. Nevertheless, in the added fury which a successful blow begets, the meek and gentle Silver Sands was for killing him.

She felt herself caught from behind in two strong gentle arms. Without even turning her head, she knew that they belonged to Henley. But she did turn her head and buried it on his breast and began to sob.

The folding doors into the little dining-room stood wide open. Sam Waring, too, had come through them and he stood beside the writhing form of the manager and looked down on it, sternly, very sternly but also with amusement.

After a little he turned to the others; Silver had stopped sobbing, and was beginning to wonder where the deliverers had sprung from.

Waring smiled at her, in his happy, good-natured way.

"You got a note from Mrs. Michelin, Silver?"

She nodded.

"She was tricked into writing it; but after thinking it out for some time she actually smelled a rat, bless her, and she told Paul and me to come here and look out for a squall. She gave

us her own latch-key and here we are, bless us!"

"Did you hear what he said?" cried Silver, her suddenly vanished rage suddenly returning.

"We did," said Waring, and he added: "Hold her tight, Paul—very tight. She's a suffragette."

Silver burst out laughing.

"Mabel's waiting down-stairs," said Waring, "to give the affair tone and respectability." He turned to Hedden.

"For heaven's sake," he said, "can't you stop moaning and writhing? Don't you realize that Henley and I are going to take you to my own private rooms in my father's house and give you something to cry for? Save your tears, man, you'll need 'em later."

"She's broken my arm," cried Hedden with a sudden squeal of pain. "Damn her!"

Waring simply kicked him, not hard, but in the right place, and reaching down pulled him to his feet, took one of his hands and pulled it through the crook of his arm, took his little finger and doubled it, the old schoolboy trick, and told him to pull himself together and behave himself.

XLVII

THE elevator boy must have thought that Waring and Hedden were affectionate friends. For they entered the elevator arm in arm, so remained during its swift descent, and so left it.

"Does that hurt?" inquired Waring softly, doubling Hedden's little finger sharply upon itself. "Well, if there is a policeman outside the building and you start anything, I'll break your finger dead off. . . . Now, then, we'll just step into this second cab and wait at my house for Henley. He's going to see the ladies home."

"Let go my finger," said Hedden in a voice convulsed with rage and fear.

"Shut up," said Waring, and kept his subduing grip.

"Good night, Mabel," he called to Miss Reeves. "Good night, Silver. Sorry I can't shake hands. See you in the morning, and all will be well. Don't be long, Paul."

"I won't," said Henley briefly and grimly.

A moment later the cab containing Hedden

and his captor was speeding toward the Warings' great house.

"What are you going to do with me?" gasped Hedden.

"I think it will be pleasanter for you not to know," said Waring.

They reached the house, and Hedden was conducted to Sam Waring's very own library and workroom annex on the top floor. Waring released the manager's little finger and closed the door.

The room was brightly lighted, and cheerful in every way, but no smile of comfort or well-being appeared on Hedden's face. He was badly scared.

"What do you think you're going to do?" he said, with a lame effort at bluster.

"I don't think," said Waring, "I know. Meanwhile till Henley comes, you'd better sit down and rest. You'll need all your strength. He's a terrible fellow when he's roused, and he knows all the tricks."

Hedden sank into a chair, sheer panic, rather than the wish to rest, having loosened knees. And his imagination, for he had that, we must give him credit, began to torture him. He remembered a passage in Kipling—two sane civilized Englishmen tying a wicked man to a bedstead and then heating

a pair of gun-barrels till they were red hot. What they did then could not be printed. . . . In one corner of the room Hedden's roving eyes perceived two or three leather gun-cases. He was suffering as much, almost, as if he was actually being tortured. And then there was the sound of light footsteps, the door opened and Henley came in, smiling grimly.

"I telephoned Sparks," he said. "He'd gone to bed, but he's dressing now and will come around as soon as he can to draw up the papers for Mr. Hedden to sign. Hadn't we better move the table against the wall, Sam, so as to have plenty of room?"

"Yes, of course," said Waring, "and roll up the rug, too. You'll have to move, Mr. Hedden, your chair is on the rug. And while you're about it you may as well take off your coat."

The room being cleared, Henley, with a kind of irrepressible eagerness, took off his coat and waistcoat, threw them into a chair, and kicked off his pumps. Then he turned to Hedden.

"Ready if you are."

But Hedden was not ready. It took them some time to get him out of his coat, onto his feet, and into the middle of the room.

"There's no use going over what you've done

to me and mine," said Henley, "and what you've tried to do. You've earned a good licking and you are going to take it. Put up your hands."

But Hedden did not put them up.

"You are famous for your imagination," said Henley sweetly, "imagine that you are a man."

Hedden's answer was to scream "Help! Murder!" at the top of his lungs, and make a sudden dash for the door.

Henley, not a bad boxer, and unusually clever with his feet, simply tripped him up.

The fall lent Hedden some of that courage peculiar to cornered rats. Cursing and blaspheming, and swinging his fists wildly, he scrambled to his feet and came at Henley like an impassioned windmill.

He was met by a loud exclamation of joy and a terrible smash in the mouth.

Three minutes later he came to his senses in a distant corner of the room. Henley, the joy not yet fled from his countenance, was nursing a broken finger.

"It's no use," said Waring mournfully, "he's big and strong, but he don't fight. I think it would have been better if you'd spanked him. It's too late for that now. The poor fellow's dying.

You're dying, aren't you, poor fellow? Gawd, what a pup!"

He dragged the manager to his feet, put on his coat for him, and dropped him into a chair.

"Make yourself at home," he said, "we'll be back when Sparks comes. And, by the way, if you try to make a row about anything that's happened or that's going to happen, we'll get you! One or other of us will get you, and don't forget."

Left to himself, locked in, the bruised and dishevelled manager ground his teeth and for some moments invented the most dreadful threats and vengeances. He looked very hideous, his eyes inflamed with weeping and his lips immensely swollen. Time passed and he began to think. It was a difficult adventure to twist and make over so that he should appear the hero of it. He actually gave up trying. On the whole, it was better that the story shouldn't get out. Who was this Sparks? A lawyer probably.

"They'll want me to sign promises," he thought. "But that won't count; it'll be under compulsion. Still if I make promises and don't keep them——"

He lifted his fingers to his swollen mouth, and tears ran out of his eyes.

"Damn them to hell!" he moaned.

A thought of Nellie Michelin came into his head; and his expression brightened.

"She took my money and then she betrayed me," was his thought.

Upon her he could be avenged to his heart's content. She wasn't any calm, violent man, but a silly, weak woman. She should learn what suffering was, damn her!

His eye perceived on the table which had been removed from the centre of the room a typewritten manuscript in a blue cover. The reader perhaps will remember that this was a copy of Henley's new play, of which Sam Waring had said that it had "When My Ship Comes In" skinned a mile.

The manager moved stealthily toward the table, and took the manuscript in his hands. He noticed that the piece was by Henley and he began to read, still standing.

Gradually the lines of rage, fear, vengeance, and childishness faded from his face. He was reading eagerly now; not word by word, but trained for many years to the art of reading plays, by paragraphs and half pages. His eyes began to brighten with enthusiasm. For as far as he had gone he could find but one fault with the play—somebody other than himself had written it. He wondered if this was the only copy. Probably not. Henley

had learned wisdom by experience. Still there was always a chance—besides the thing could be so altered—the scene changed, laid in the country, say, the names of the characters, etc., that a jury of twelve honest men and true would never recognize it.

Footsteps sounded in the hall and voices. With a smile of exquisite triumph McKay Hedden folded the manuscript once lengthwise, thrust it into his inside pocket, and retreated as far from the table as possible.

XLVIII

"GOOD morning, ladies," said Henley. "It's a fine day, isn't it?"

"I'm particularly impressed with the blue sky behind the black clouds," said Waring.

The ladies flew into a rage.

"Tell us what happened—tell us at once!" they cried.

So the gentlemen told them all that had happened.

"The play is to go on," said Henley, "until spring. I'm to have a seven per cent flat royalty but no credit on the programmes. There didn't seem to be any way to manage that, and save Hedden's face."

"Why save his face?" cried Silver.

"You didn't see it after Paul hit him," said Sam.

"The money just now," said Henley, "is the main thing. It will pay back what he's tricked you into owing. Then your contract with him has been cancelled. You're to sign one that ends when the play stops running—early in May, that is."

"I'm glad," said Silver, "that the play isn't to be punished, and it's fun to be praised and applauded every night except Sundays."

"Don't you get praised Sundays?" asked Henley plaintively.

And she smiled with delight at him. Then, her face grave and anxious:

"I've seen my father," she said; "and it's true about his killing a man. But the man had to be killed, and no jury would do anything to father. They couldn't when they'd heard the story."

"No jury will have a chance," said Waring. "Hedden is convinced that if anything comes out through him he won't live to boast about it. We've made that clear."

"But you wouldn't."

"Yes I would—by Jove, I would! or so close to it that he'd always be sorry I hadn't gone the whole way. Don't worry about your father, Silver. There's nothing to worry about."

Just how it came about is unknown. I think Waring asked if he would find a cigarette in the dining-room, and Mabel Reeves went with him to help look. Anyway, they disappeared and were gone some time.

Henley simply caught Silver Sands up in his arms, and began to kiss and murmur. Presently

the murmurs became words, intelligent words, that she was able to answer:

"'Deed," she said, "and you needn't think I want to wait till May, either."

And they resolved that they wouldn't.

"But Paul," said Silver, "there's one thing you ought to know, and maybe when you know you won't want to marry me. *I'm* proud of it, but other people mightn't be. Poor father killed a man. That's bad enough; but what do you think my mother did? She used to be shot out of a cannon every afternoon and evening for a living!"

The young aristocrat folded the lovely girl still closer in his arms and they laughed till they kissed.

THE END